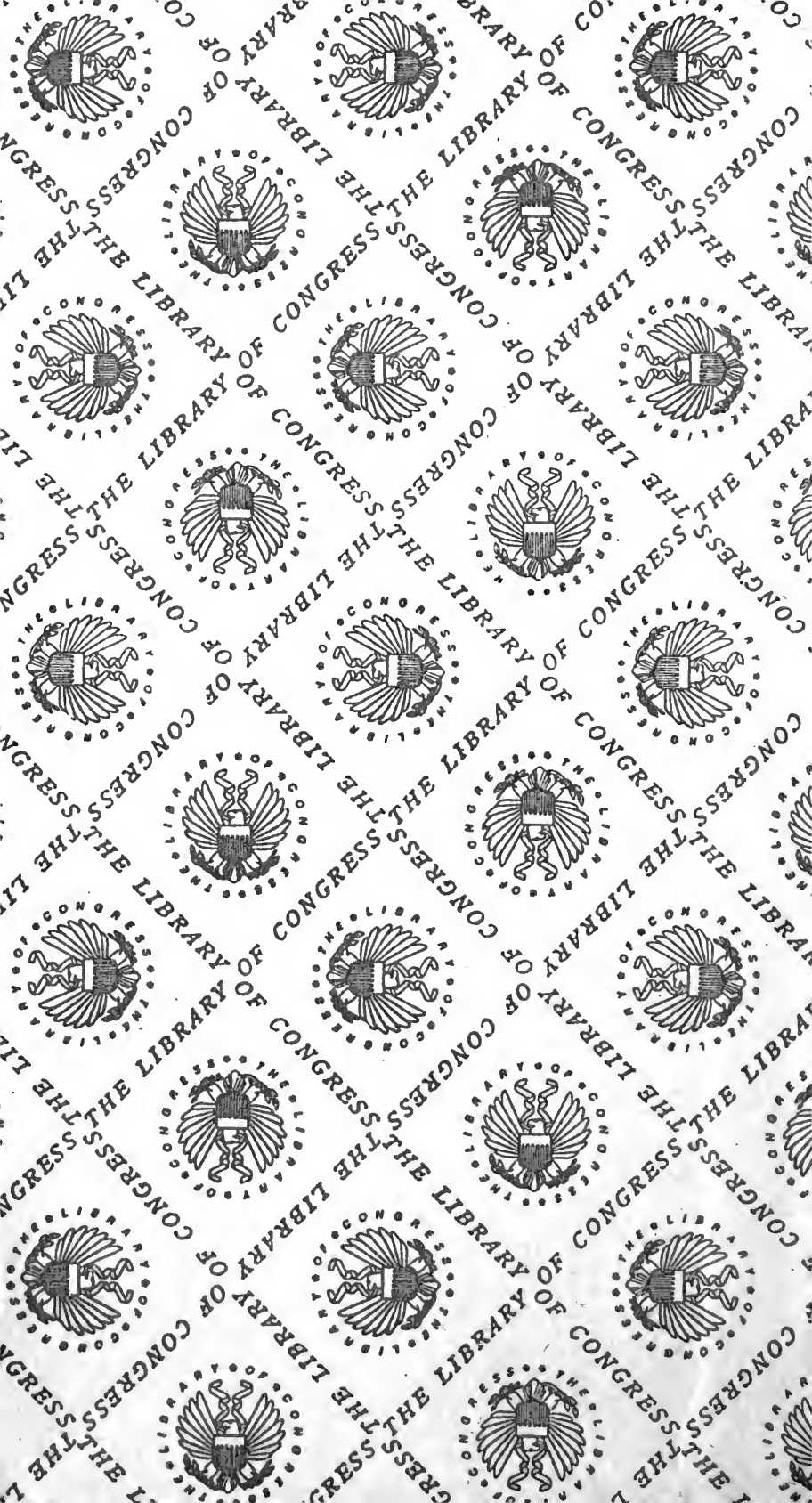
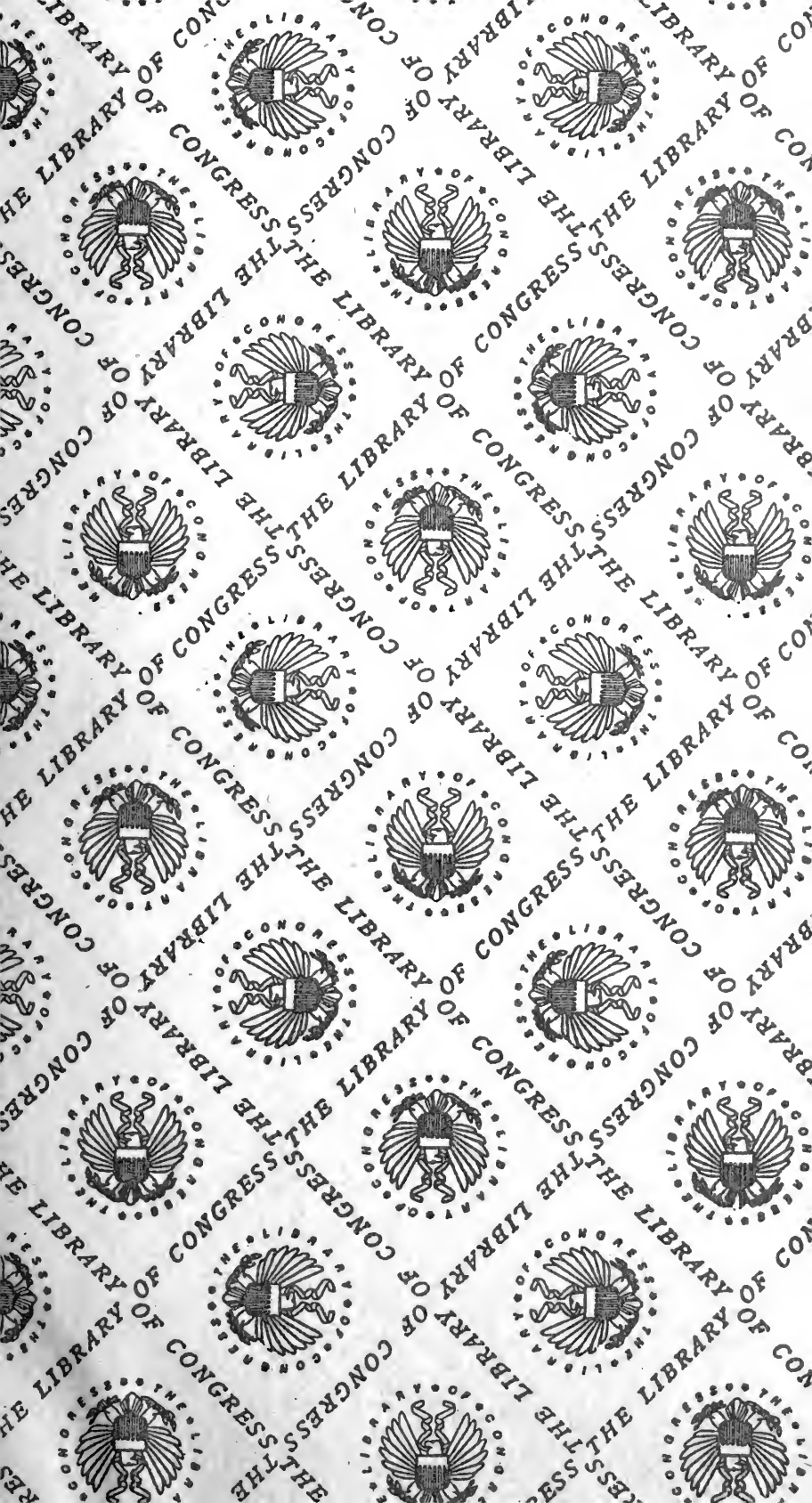


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# ISABELLA GRAY.

A NOVEL.

BY A LADY.

---


"O peace of mind, angelic guest,  
Thou soft companion of the breast,  
Dispense thy balmy store!  
Wing all our thoughts to reach the skies,  
'Till earth, receding from our eyes,  
Shall vanish as we soar!"

*Goldsmith.*

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## P R E F A C E .

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I RESPECTFULLY present this small volume to the public, and solicit for it the kind indulgence of criticism.

It would have been far more congenial to my own feelings, and, I doubt not, also to those of numerous readers, if a description of more gay and cheerful scenes had formed the subject-matter of our tale; but an intimate acquaintance with the varied vicissitudes of life, coupled with a firm impression that the shadows of life are, in the majority of instances, vastly in excess of the sunshine, has led me to think that it is profitable to all, to occasionally review those principles which form the only true support of the often weary, and nearly despondent, pilgrim through the cheerless highway of sorrow-embittered existence.

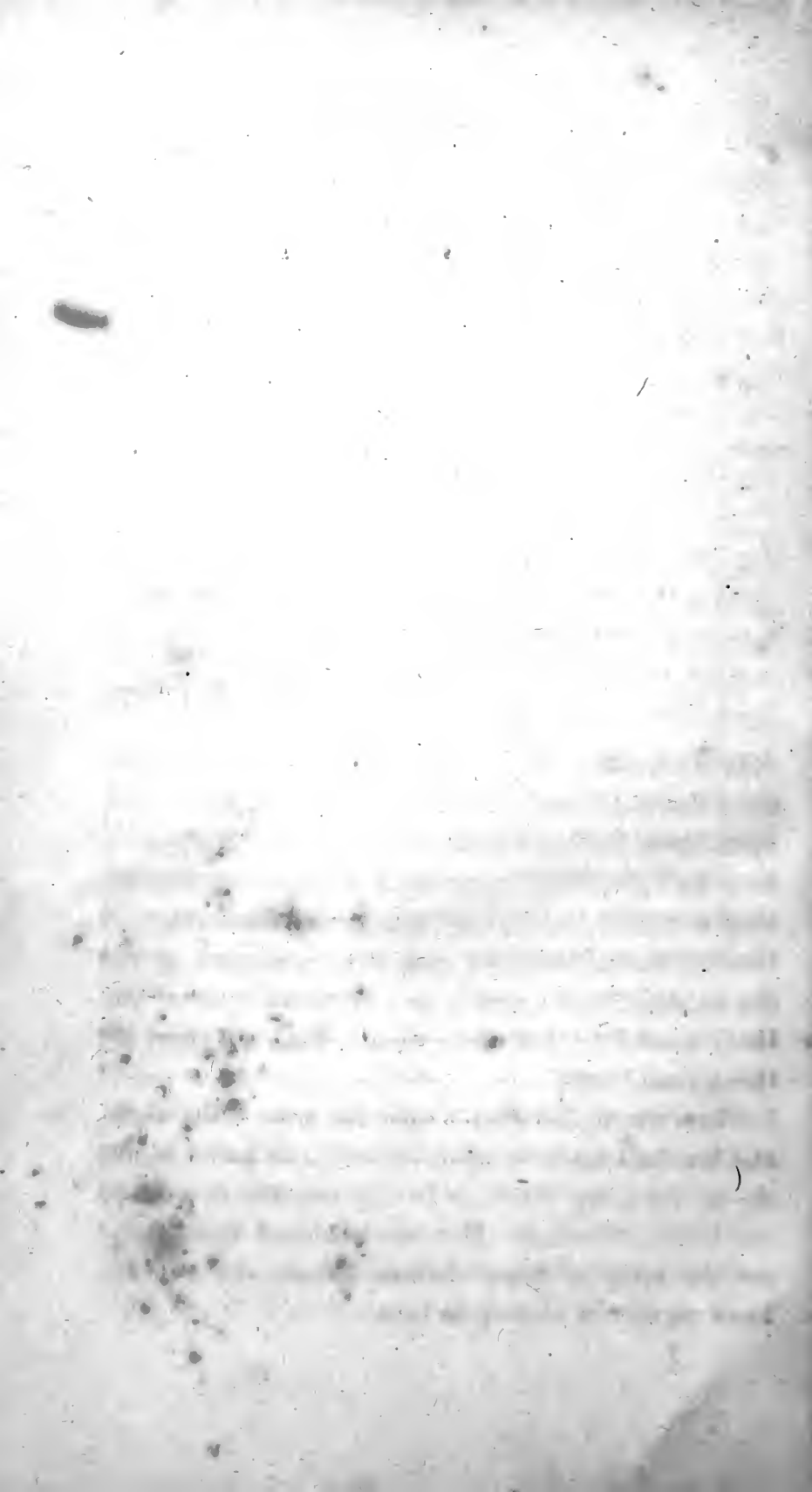
THE AUTHORESS.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROMISE.

---

“Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind’s breath,  
And stars to set,—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh! Death.”

*Mrs. Hemans.*

---

IN a noiseless, and somewhat hurried manner, Mrs. Gray entered a small parlor, from an adjoining apartment, with an expression of countenance indicating deep and heart-felt emotion, and, throwing herself, with a nervous movement, into a large arm-chair, in front of a dimly-burning coal fire, exclaimed, as she did so, with clasped hands, and upturned eyes—“Oh, God! must I see him die? Cans’t Thou not spare me this second blow?”

Then, resting her elbows upon the arms of her chair, and her burning brow upon her cold and pallid hands, she sat for some fifteen or twenty minutes, in solitary and bitter reflection. Her overburdened heart found not the relief of tears—human nature, she thought, knew no sorrow so deep as hers.

The room in which she sat, serving alike for parlor and eating room, was scantily furnished with the remnants of former luxury. The chair in which she reclined had been her husband's favorite seat. Who can imagine her sufferings, as she thought of him who had been, for so many years, her tender support in all trials? And now, impoverished,—without either his counsel to direct, or his sympathy to comfort—she was called upon to relinquish her only son to the fell destroyer. Is it strange that her woman's heart should be appalled at the vision of the dreamy future?

“Mother!” said Isabella Gray, as she opened the door leading into the room where Mrs. Gray was sitting; “Henry is calling for you—will you come?”

Mrs. Gray immediately arose, and, on hearing that her son had again rallied, and could speak, the hope that clings to us while life remains, encouraged the fond mother to anticipate some favorable change; and, when taking a seat beside him, she felt his pulse to be stronger, her countenance brightened, and, in imagination, she again saw her darling son restored to health.

For a short period she dared not speak, fearing the bright vision would vanish.

“Henry!” said his sister Isabella (his only sister, now a young lady in the bloom of early womanhood) as she took her brother's hand in hers; “you are better, are you not? You look better.”

In a voice scarcely audible, the dying man replied, “No, Isabella; only revived.”



Mrs. Gray laid her son's hand gently upon the bed, and walked to the window, where Doctor Barton was standing, apparently much absorbed in thought.

"Doctor," said she, "do you not think there is a favorable change in my son?"

"No, madam, not any; embrace this opportunity, if you have any thing to communicate. I have been confident during the night, that if he should survive until this hour of the morning, he might revive for a time; but you must not deceive yourself, it will be of short duration." And, as the mother turned to retrace her steps to the bedside, he added, "Be calm; I think he has something to communicate."

Just at that moment the young man was seized with a paroxysm of coughing, which was so violent, and exhausted his feeble strength to such an alarming degree, that the doctor had great apprehensions he might pass away during its continuance. But the prompt administration of palliatives, and the calm, tender attentions of his mother and sister, allayed the excitement, and he dropped off into a gentle sleep, from which he awakened so much refreshed, that he spoke in an audible voice, though but slowly, and asked for a drink.

After receiving it, he drew his mother and sister nearer him, held a hand of each, and, looking earnestly, very earnestly, in their faces, addressed them alternately, saying:

"Promise me that you will not grieve for me!"

Oh! what did it not then cost the devoted mother

and sister to remain calm, when called upon to grant such a request—the last one of him whose final departure must inevitably, for them, render the world a desert, and life a weary pilgrimage. For his sake, and the love they bore him, they would not embitter his last moments; yet they both hesitated to answer.

“You have every thing to comfort you in my sickness,” said the tremulous voice. “All has been done which medical skill could do; and you see my composure, and willingness to depart—only for your sakes would I live. The only thing which now disturbs me, is the fear you will grieve too much for me. Promise me now, in perfect sincerity, that you will not, and I shall then be at peace.”

“Yes, my dear son,” said Mrs. Gray, in a subdued, calm tone of voice, “I cannot embitter one moment of the few that yet remain to you, by withholding any thing, at whatever cost it is purchased. I now give you my sacred promise, that I will at all times cherish your memory with love, and, as far as lies in my power, I will not only refrain from yielding to my grief, but also try, my dear boy, to be thankful you are at rest. It will be our daily duty, so to live that we may be reunited in perfect happiness.”

The sister, as she kissed his death-chilled lips, could not trust herself to say more than—“I’ll do my best, Henry, for your sake.”

For some time after this conversation, the young man lay quiet and calm; but at length he spoke, saying:

“Of late I have thought much of you both. I have been very anxious on your account, as your means of support is so limited. But no good can I now do you either by act or counsel. I know your energy and your trustfulness; and in the hands of Him who has ordered and directed the changing events of the last year of our lives, I leave you, with perfect confidence that you will not be comfortless. So much goodness and virtue cannot always suffer.”

He had conversed slowly, and with great labor; but his anxiety to extort from his mother and sister a promise that they would not sink down, overwhelmed with sorrow at his loss, as is too commonly the case, gave him unnatural strength; and, after many assurances from them, both by word and look, that they would use their efforts to be sustained, resting, with perfect confidence, their trust in Him who has promised he will never forsake the widow and the fatherless, he exclaimed:

“All is right, now, and peaceful. Give me a drink, please.”

After he had received it, he expressed a desire to have his pillows arranged, as he felt inclined to sleep. And he did sleep—but 'twas his last.

The comforting belief felt by the survivors, that the peace of mind he had so recently exhibited was but the beginning of that perfect peace now open to him, gave them almost superhuman strength to fulfill their promise.

Doctor Barton had been an entire stranger to Mrs. Gray, previous to her son's illness; but, being a man of kind and benevolent impulses, he had become deeply interested in her apparently friendless condition. He therefore insisted upon relieving her as far as he possibly could, from the painful duty she was now called upon to perform; and, accordingly, he sought an undertaker without delay.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE FUNERAL.

---

“Weep not for those whom the vail of the tomb,  
In life’s happy morning, hath hid from our eyes.”

---

*Moore.*

THE following morning the small, unostentatious, but comfortable dwelling of Mrs. Gray, was a quiet, and solemn habitation to its two occupants.

The mother, with the aid of the undertaker, had prepared the remains of her son for their final resting-place. How could she permit strangers’ hands alone to perform that sad office? He had ever been to her all that a fond mother could desire, and she did not falter, while there remained one act to perform, however painful it might be to her.

During the morning, Dr. Barton called to inquire about the health of the ladies, and also to inform them that he had made arrangements for the burial, which he recommended should take place on the following day, if it met their approbation.

“You are very kind, Dr. Barton,” said Mrs. Gray; “you told me yesterday that you would select the burial-place. May I ask where it is?”

“In Greenwood, madam,” said the doctor.

Mrs. Gray remained silent for a time, evidently, from her excited, restless manner, desirous of making an unpleasant communication. At length she said, "In justice to you, doctor, as well as to ourselves, you should be informed of our limited means of support; and we must act in all things accordingly."

"I have already received such information. Your son, during his illness, conversed with me freely upon the subject; but I beg you will not suffer yourself to think of it for the present. The place I have selected in Greenwood Cemetery is on my own lot; and I do assure you, madam, I shall esteem it a privilege to have the remains of one whom I so highly regard laid near the spot I desire to be my own last resting-place. I feel myself unfortunate in not having had a longer acquaintance with Mr. Gray, for he certainly was a young man of most estimable qualities. It has been one of the most painful events of my long practice of twenty years, that I could not administer to his recovery. The few nights which I have passed with him alone have endeared him much to me. His greatest inducement to live was for you two. Often did he speak of you with great solicitude! and I think he was never satisfied until you gave him such assurances as seemed entirely to allay all his doubts and fears. I think I never witnessed such confidence in the fulfillment of a promise as he exhibited in that of yours.

"But, my friends," continued Dr. Barton, "we have nothing to mourn for, so far as he is concerned. Let us look to ourselves, and see that we so live as to be able

to join him, and then the trials you are now passing through will be at an end. Mrs. Gray, I have been much more impressed, as I stood by the bed of your sick and dying son, than is usual for me ; and anything I can do for yourself and Miss Gray, that will in any small degree mitigate your present affliction, I beg you will consider as a tribute to his memory.

The doctor's high eulogium of the young man, and his kind, unostentatious sympathy, were to the mother and sister like a healing balm ; and, for the first time since the spirit of their loved one had taken its upward flight, they both wept ; and they wept long, for the chords of sympathy in their hearts, when touched so tenderly, could not but respond.

Dr. Barton was happy to see them find relief in tears. Their calm but dejected composure foreboded no good ; and, with the view of leaving them unobserved, and for a time alone, he arose and walked into the room where all that remained of Henry Gray was lying.

When the doctor returned to the room he found the ladies quite composed, and he again resumed his former seat in front of a small fire in the grate ; for, notwithstanding the month of May had far advanced, the mornings were sufficiently cool to require some fire.

"I desire, doctor," said Mrs. Gray, in a trembling voice, "to assure you of our appreciation of your kindness ; and, as you have been pleased to anticipate my most ardent wish, in procuring so desirable a burial-place for my son, I feel a delicacy in asking anything more at your hands ; but——"

“Certainly not, madam. I insist that you allow me the favor of hearing any suggestion or request you may have to make.”

“I only wished to remark, that I know very few persons in the city; indeed, none whom we could claim as friends, from our slight acquaintance; and therefore I desire that the funeral should be private.”

“Consult your own pleasure, madam. But, are not your acquaintances aware of your residence here?”

“No. We have been so disinclined to society, since our arrival in the city, that we have not made ourselves known.”

But she did not add, what rushed to her mind and hung upon her lips for utterance, that, having had the society of those she most loved and enjoyed, she had not a wish beyond, and therefore was content. As she thought of her recent bereavement, which had robbed her earthly paradise of one of its greatest treasures, she dared not hazard an explanation, and consequently concealed the emotions of her heart.

“Our rector, Dr. Montgomery, came to see us yesterday, supposing my son was better, as he was improving when he last saw him, eight days since; and, being slightly indisposed himself, he had omitted to call.”

“Yes,” said the doctor; “he was surprised, and reproached himself very much, when I saw him last evening.”

“He ought not,” said Isabella, who had been sitting in quiet, almost like a statue. “He could have done



Henry no good during the last few days. His previous visits to him, and the last administration of the Lord's Supper, seemed to finish his ministry in all that could be of any special benefit. Although it would have been gratifying to my mother and myself to have seen him daily, it has no doubt been better, in consequence of Henry's extremely nervous condition, that he was not disturbed by any stranger's face. He enjoyed my reading, perhaps, more than he could another person's, for, being perfectly at ease with me alone, his thoughts were not at all distracted."

"No doubt you are correct, Miss Gray; for I have often observed, during my practice, that the excitement produced in the minds of my patients, by the visits of those with whom they were not familiar, seriously retarded their recovery, although it was not perceptible to friends."

"A very strong inducement, then, is presented for the laity to seek the personal acquaintance of the clergy; for 'the dark valley' must, at some time, be passed by us'all," said Mrs. Gray.

Your remark is perfectly just, madam, and if personal intercourse between the clergy and laity were more common, our profession would not be so frequently and unjustly censured, for prohibiting the clergyman to visit his patient. I had a patient, whose life was in most imminent danger from hemorrhage of the lungs; the young lady was alarmed and extremely nervous, but I had hopes of controlling the disease, if I could allay the great nervous irritability.

The mother, as was very natural, became alarmed for her daughter's safety, and desired her clergyman to visit her. I begged her not to think of such a thing, for a little time; that there was great hazard from the least excitement, and it might prove a serious injury. She could not agree with me, and said she was confident that she, herself, would be more soothed than excited by such a visit.

"I remarked, that I did not consider one who was in full health, and possessing strong powers of self-control, qualified to sympathize in her daughter's very feeble, and nervously excited condition. However, she insisted that a clergyman should be sent for, which I had no objection to; but I very reluctantly told her I would not take the responsibility of his entering her daughter's room. And I persevered in keeping my patient quiet, until I considered it safe to admit her spiritual adviser; and, I am confident, if I know my own heart, that no one was more relieved by so doing than myself. I had much to contend with, for a time, in ill-natured remarks, but a consciousness of right sustained me!"

"I think I hear some one at the street door, Isabella," said Mrs. Gray.

Doctor Barton, not having seen or heard anything of a servant in the house, during his attendance upon Mr. Gray, immediately arose, saying—

"Allow me to open the door, Miss Gray."

The entry being small, which separated the street door from the little parlor, the ladies could distinctly hear the conversation.

“Does Mr. Henry Gray reside here?” was the inquiry, in a manly tone of voice; and, after some conversation in the entry, in too low a tone for the ladies’ ears, the doctor entered the parlor, accompanied by a gentleman, whom he introduced to Mrs. and Miss Gray, as “Mr. Isaacs, the principal proprietor in the large commercial house in which Mr. Gray had been employed during his residence in New York.”

Mr. Isaacs was a gentleman of affable, agreeable manners, apparently about fifty years of age, good-looking, tall, erect in stature, and having rather a nervous cast of countenance, common to those who pass their time mostly in the counting-house.

“I regret exceedingly,” said Mr. Isaacs, after being seated, and addressing Mrs. Gray, “that I had not sooner learned the severity of your son’s illness.”

“When I addressed you by note, Mr. Isaacs, excusing my son’s attendance at the store, I had not the least idea that two weeks would find him where he now lies.”

“No, your note did not indicate alarm, or I should have called to see him; for the young man has won my confidence and esteem by his gentlemanly and upright deportment during the time he has been with us. Allow me to inquire if any of the young men from the store have visited him?”

“They have not, sir. But we do not regard it as any want of respect for my son, for they were not aware of his extreme illness, or they, doubtless, would have done so. He often spoke of the good feeling which existed between several of them and himself.”

“Sorry, very sorry. I regret it exceedingly,” said Mr. Isaacs.

“I beg you will not indulge in any unpleasant reflections, Mr. Isaacs; for my son, even after the day I wrote you, was too ill to have seen any person.”

“But it might have been a gratification to him to have been inquired for, and to know that he was not entirely forgotten by us—it certainly would have been such to us;” then turning to Dr. Barton, he inquired what was Mr. Gray’s disease.

The doctor gave him a full account of the young man’s severe attack of hemorrhage of the lungs, and of his want of constitutional strength.

“Poor fellow!” exclaimed his employer, with a trembling lip and a tear-dimmed eye, “it is hard to have him taken so early.”

Mr. Isaacs was desirous of having Mr. Gray’s funeral cortege in keeping with his own estimation of his merits; but Mrs. and Miss Gray expressed a great desire that the funeral should be as private as possible, in order that they might see his remains deposited in their narrow house.

Having no friend to whom they could commit that sacred trust, they asked not to be prevented from accompanying his remains to Greenwood. What was a long funeral train, composed of strangers, in the estimation of their grief-stricken hearts? No—they desired no ostentation, but a simple, respectable burial.

The next morning, at the hour of twelve, there appeared at Mrs. Gray’s door the undertaker’s hearse

and three carriages. The coffin containing the body was placed in the hearse.

The Rev. Dr. Montgomery, Dr. Barton, and Mr. Isaacs occupied one carriage; four of the young gentlemen from Mr. Isaacs' store, another; the ladies the remaining one, alone.

Slowly and solemnly did that funeral procession wend its way to the lonely, but beautiful city of the dead. Alighting at the door of the chapel, which stands near the entrance gate of the cemetery, they entered. The young gentlemen officiating as bearers, carrying the coffin, followed by the ladies, accompanied by Mr. Isaacs and Dr. Barton, and preceded by the man of God, repeating that sublime passage from St. John, "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The remainder of the service, not less sublime and beautiful, was listened to with the deepest interest by all present, and by it the bereaved were soothed and prepared for their last sad duty.

On reaching the place of interment, the mother and daughter calmly and composedly alighted from their carriage and stood beside the narrow space. They saw earth committed to its mother earth, and dust to dust; but, with a firm faith and hope in a happy reunion at the resurrection morn, they stood, apparently lost to all around them, in deep, profound meditation, until the service was ended, and all were in readiness to return, when they were aroused to consciousness by

Dr. Barton offering his arm to Mrs. Gray, and Mr. Isaacs proffering his to Miss Gray, for the purpose of handing them to their carriage.

They were now returning to their lonely home, the dread of which seemed almost insupportable. Before they had left the cemetery grounds they were aroused by a sharp flash of lightning, followed by distant thunder. The sky became rapidly overcast with dense black clouds, the wind arose to a fearful height, the lightning momentarily streaked the heavens, and the thunder, which was by this time fearfully near, rolled with solemn grandeur; but its sublimity was lost upon Mrs. and Miss Gray, who only felt an emotion of terror.

The comfort derived from the shelter which their home afforded them from the terrific storm, mitigated for a time its loneliness, and gave them an opportunity for composure and rest; at the same time enabling them fully to appreciate the truth—that man, if he will but accept it, will never cease to find some ray of comfort, something that will divert the channel of his thoughts, and thereby enable him to receive consolation, though it may chance to be the terrifying storm.

## CHAPTER III.

## FAMILY HISTORY, AND RELATIVE EVENTS.

---

“There is a face whose blushes tell  
Affection’s tale upon the cheek ;  
But pallid at one fond farewell,  
Proclaims more love than words can speak.”

*Byron.*

“I pray thee let my heart alone,  
Since now ’tis raised above thee.”

*Thomas Stanley.*

---

WE will now leave Mrs. Gray and her daughter, for the purpose of giving the reader the information necessary to a more perfect understanding of the causes which have placed them in their present humble condition.

Mrs. Gray was a native of England, and resided there until about sixteen years of age, when she removed to the United States with her father, mother, and her only brother, James—the latter five years her senior.

The loss of an only sister, two years older than herself, was the original cause of their leaving their native home. Her father, Mr. James Henry Fitzgerald, after his daughter’s decease, became melancholy. Yielding to the advice of friends, he sought change of

scene,—and having, while traveling in this country for the purpose of diversion, purchased a small farm adjacent to the city of Cincinnati, he returned at once to England for his family, who rather reluctantly accompanied him to their new home. But, finding it to be pleasantly situated upon the banks of a fine river, they very soon became domesticated (having brought with them almost their entire household furniture,) and settled down, with that home-feeling so peculiar to the English character.

Mr. Fitzgerald did not possess great wealth, but a very liberal competency. His aim was not so much to amass a large fortune, as to retain what he had, and to enjoy it. Possessing a finely-cultivated literary taste, he was more partial to his library than to the cares of his farm. However, he superintended the latter sufficiently to keep it in good order, and, with the aid of a man whom he had brought with him, it was easily accomplished without becoming a tax upon his time.

He was fond of society, and entertained his friends moderately, but with true hospitality. Mrs. Fitzgerald saw the beneficial effect that change had wrought upon her husband's spirits, and encouraged his natural inclination for society, which was an advantage to her daughter, who became a bright ornament in the social circles of the adjacent city.

She had been educated with great care, possessed much of her father's taste for literature, was fond of drawing, but more partial to music, and performed



upon the piano with skill. She had strongly-marked and pleasing features, was comely in person, and agreeable in manners and conversation.

On her twentieth birth-day she was led to the altar by Mr. William Gray, a highly respectable lawyer of Cincinnati, who was ten years her senior. He had been left an orphan when quite young, with a very handsome property in the hands of executors, who were unfortunate in not having much of it to surrender when the young man became of age. His guardian, however, had looked well to his education, which was, perhaps better for him than the possession of a large property. Having ascertained that, after defraying the expenses of his education and his profession, he had but a pittance left, and that his executors were both bankrupt, he saw that no alternative was left him but to pursue with active energy and an iron will, the arduous practice of his profession. But a short time elapsed, as may be supposed, before he had obtained a highly respectable position, and at the period of his marriage he was in the enjoyment of more than a comfortable living.

Isabella and Henry Fitzgerald Gray were their only children. Isabella was two years older than her brother, and, as she matured into womanhood, developed a truly lovely character. She was a descendant, on her mother's side, from an old Roman family, and had more strongly-marked Roman features than her immediate ancestors. To a clear brunette complexion, dark brown hair, large hazel eyes, tall person, graceful

form, and dignified bearing, were joined a thoughtful expression when her features were in repose ; but, when aroused by conversation, her countenance reflected her intellect, with that radiant variance which has so powerful a tendency to fascinate. Strong in her attachments, forbearing in her disposition, she never failed to maintain a dignified self-respect whenever its assertion became necessary. However, those instances were rare, as, being a great favorite, her countenance and approbation were more universally sought, than her wishes were opposed.

At the age of twenty her hand was sought in marriage by Mr. Alexander Brown, a gentleman of leisure, possessing but two qualifications that were desirable—a very fine personal appearance, and wealth. He had inherited a princely fortune ; and no one doubted his ability to retain it, for his soul was of decidedly too small a calibre to understand the luxury of spending more than was requisite to maintain his position in genteel society. He made some pretensions to literary taste, talked of books, read some, and occasionally made presents of others, which he was careful to purchase at the lowest possible price. He drove an elegant pair of horses—the only real luxury in which he indulged himself, except his cigar and full-length mirror—was not principled against taking wine with a friend, but had an aversion to paying the bills. Having no near relatives with whom he could make his residence, rendered it necessary for him to make his home at lodgings ; but, at the time of his introduction to the reader,

he had sought the freedom of a hotel, managing to keep himself so much aloof from the commonalty, as not to render it necessary to entertain many; and, owing to his general exclusiveness he expended but a trifling portion of his income. His conversation was generous and liberal, and he no doubt flattered himself that he really was so; but then he seldom was in funds when charity was solicited.

Notwithstanding this was the general estimate of Mr. Brown's character, his wealth, like a pleasant delusion, concealed his defects to those who were dazzled by a fine personal appearance, fine establishment, and a fortune in actual possession. To such, Mr. Brown was certainly an eligible match; but not to Isabella Gray. She had been educated in an entirely opposite school from that of her handsome admirer.

Her father was a gentleman, who realized from the practice of his profession a handsome remuneration; but, in gratifying his generous views in the education of his daughter and son, in traveling, in hospitality, and in benevolent acts, his expenses were generally found to equal his income. As might be supposed, the daughter of such a man imbibed her father's noble sentiments. Isabella Gray possessed decided natural talents; and, having been from childhood educated to a high appreciation of intellectual culture, beside imbibing daily, by intercourse with her parents, as also her more intimate associates, pure and ennobling sentiments, which, when combined, complete woman's true character, she could not find a companion in the man

whose highest appreciation of woman was personal appearance.

“Strange!” soliloquized Mr. Brown, after recovering somewhat from his astonishment at the refusal of his hand; “she is the first lady I have met with, whom I think could grace such a fortune as mine. Fine looking—yes, beautiful—in conversation, fascinating—just the woman for the establishment I mean to support. True, she is not wealthy”—and, with a contemptuous smile, as he paced up and down his solitary room, he exclaimed—“D—n it! she ought to feel flattered with the honor of marrying as handsome a man as this;” turning at the same time to feast his eyes upon the perfect representation of his splendid person in a full-length mirror. His vanity satiated, he continued to promenade the room, with his eyes riveted upon the carpet.

“To think,” continued he, in his reverie, “of my fortune against her small outfit, at best, and perhaps none at all. Oh! it cannot be—she does not mean it; she only wants to see me at her feet; but she’ll wait awhile for that. This is only the first refusal. I see how it is: this is her first offer; they say ladies never accept the first. Well, I’ll wait for a time, and make her a second. She does not know my perseverance. I’ll marry her yet.”

So thought Mr. Alexander Brown. Others may have done likewise under similar circumstances.

Miss Gray was much in society, but did not thus pass all her time. She received the visits of many

gentlemen at home, the result of her father's social taste as well as her own attractions, and was much admired. However, she neither desired nor sought a multitude of conquests; it was uncongenial to her sincerity of character—one of her most prominent traits; and the unexpected, very systematic, business-like, self-confident proposal she received from Mr. Brown, a gentleman who was only a general acquaintance, was perhaps as astounding to her as her refusal was to him.

About this period she became acquainted with Mr. Robert Williams, and the intimacy very soon ripened into a mutual attachment.

Mr. Williams was a resident of Cincinnati, and at the time a student of law; but, in consequence of limited means and an ardent desire to acquire his profession, he was so fully occupied as to prevent his devoting much time to society. His term of probation, however, being nearly ended—he had but six months longer to apply himself to study, before he would be admitted to the practice of his profession—and, as he had heretofore been a very close student, he resolved to relax in some small degree, and enjoy that society which his education and acquirements so well qualified him to adorn.

In personal appearance he was not remarkable in any respect, except for his manly bearing—he was rather tall in stature, and fine-looking, but by no means a handsome man. No person, however, could observe his features, when lighted up by the varying

emotions produced by conversation, without acknowledging his possession of a highly-gifted intellect. His eyes were dark, full, and expressive, his voice deep, manly, and musical; in conversation he was intelligent and fascinating, and his whole character displayed the noble, generous, high-minded man.

Mr. Gray had met him at the office of his professional brother, in business intercourse; and, from sympathy of feeling, after learning that he had yet his fortune to make, (for Mr. Gray had not forgotten his own early struggles,) he invited Mr. Williams to visit him at his residence, "which," said he, "is a pleasant drive from town."

"Thank you, Mr. Gray," said Mr. Williams, "it will afford me pleasure to do so."

"A little recreation will be of service to you. I rather think you are working too close."

"I may have done so, but not now."

"Well, you had better take it a little easier; there is not much doubt of a successful examination. Come out, and make us a visit. Now, don't delay; I shall anticipate the pleasure of seeing you shortly."

"Thank you, Mr. Gray; I shall avail myself of that pleasure as early as possible," was Mr. Williams' cordial reply, as he accepted Mr. Gray's proffered hand on leaving the office.

After his introduction to Mr. Gray's family, Mr. Williams was in the habit of repeating his visits quite frequently. He enjoyed the pleasant drive from town; the pleasant promenade through the grounds leading

to the river's bank; the cordial, sincere hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Gray; but, most of all, his conversations with Isabella.

He was scarcely conscious, for a time, of the cause of his desire to repeat his visits; but the heart is justly said to be a prompt tell-tale in all matters which concern its emotions; and it was not long before Mr. Williams became conscious of a deep and tender interest in Miss Gray. He was satisfied, too, that it was mutual.

“And what was he to do?” was the question he put to himself one night, after returning from a visit to Mr. Gray's, just previous to the time of his admission to the bar. “Yes; what am I to do? I cannot marry Miss Gray; I am not in a situation to marry. Poor—nothing to depend upon but my own exertions—I cannot take her from such a delightful home without some more certain prospect to rely upon. I may fail in my profession—may not succeed in business of any kind; and the idea of bringing such an one to poverty—oh, no! I cannot think of it. But suppose I ask an engagement—no, never! I will not bind a lady to an engagement that I may never be in a situation to fulfill. No, it must not be. But, had I wealth, how quickly it should be laid at her feet. So lovely—so intellectual—everything that I could desire in my wife. Oh! the very thought that I may never call her mine, almost maddens me!”

In this manner did Mr. Williams reflect upon his love for Miss Gray, which had now assumed an unmis-

takable form. He understood perfectly the source from which he derived pleasure in his visits at Mr. Gray's; and that night he decided, before he slept, that, as an honorable man, he must make those visits less frequent, whatever the cost might be.

He had not declared his love in words; but, as love begets its kindred passion, theirs was reflected in each other's hearts by the thousand nameless ways which the heart alone can employ, to reveal its hidden emotions.

Not long after Mr. Williams was admitted to practice, an opportunity presented for his removal to California, where he could engage in the business of his profession under very advantageous circumstances.

He decided at once to go. The hope of gain induced him to separate himself from all his congenial associations, and from the individual whose society had, during the greater part of the past year, given a new impulse to his aspirations for the future.

Before departing, he took leave of Mr. Gray and his family, with many expressions of friendship and of gratitude for their hospitality. A casual observer would not have noticed any trace of emotion, but the mother, who witnessed the silent shaking of hands as Mr. Williams parted from Isabella, saw that his feelings deprived him of the power of speech, and was convinced of the reality of that which she had previously only suspected.

The summer subsequent to the departure of Mr. Williams for his new theatre of action, Mr. Gray died



suddenly of cholera. His son was immediately summoned home from the city of New York, where he had passed the previous year in the acquirement of business knowledge. Mr. Gray gave his son the opportunity of selecting his own occupation, after he had finished his education; and, as the young man was not very strong, he feared that the sedentary life, which was inseparable from the study and practice of a profession, might produce a deleterious effect upon his health, wherefore, consulting his inclination, he made choice of a commercial business, and, with his father's influence, readily obtained a desirable situation in the extensive establishment of Mr. Isaacs, in the city of New York.

Before setting out from that city to join his mother and sister, and mingle his tears with theirs in the sudden and almost overwhelming affliction which had befallen them, he obtained the privilege of retaining his situation, provided his absence did not exceed one month.

We pass over the meeting with his afflicted family, as also the events usual on such occasions, which followed in rapid succession, and resume our narrative at the period when Henry Gray's leave of absence from his business had nearly expired.

Mrs. Gray found her husband's pecuniary affairs were so much embarrassed, that, after liquidating the claims against his estate, she had but a comparatively small sum remaining, and even that was obtained by a great sacrifice of feeling. She had now no relative to look to but her brother, her parents having some

years previously passed away, leaving nothing but their homestead, which Mr. Gray had since made his residence. And now, their beautiful, long-cherished home—cherished from love for its former occupants, and the multitude of associations twining around the hearts of the survivors—their comfortable, spacious dwelling and beautiful pleasure-ground, with its romantic seclusions and beautiful promenades, enlivened by a view of the gently-flowing river, on whose bank it reposed, must be parted with—must all be sold.

Mr. James Fitzgerald married not long after arriving in the United States, and removed to a large tract of land, which he had previously purchased in one of the States of the far West, with the view of indulging his fondness for agriculture. The brother and sister saw each other but seldom, except during their annual visits, which had a tendency to foster a mutual kind feeling; but Mr. Fitzgerald devoted his time and energies almost exclusively to his agricultural pursuits, and was fully compensated for his labors in the possession of a fine farm and well-stored coffers. His fondness for gain increased with his prosperity—the natural consequence of an isolated position. Generosity, like all virtues, acquires strength by its frequent exercise, and, undoubtedly, the most accessible avenue to it is sympathy; a road which must be well traveled, in order that the rank weeds of selfishness may not obstruct the pathway.

As might be supposed, the brother, upon receiving a letter from his sister, detailing the particulars of her

husband's death, of the depressed condition of their circumstances, and of the necessity which compelled them to leave the home so dear to them all, and to seek their future subsistence by their own exertions, expressed his sorrow for his sister, as well as his satisfaction with the courageous resignation which her letter seemed to indicate, and intimated that, with her energy, he had no doubt she would be successful. In like manner he wrote to his sister, requesting her to correspond with him frequently, saying that it would ever be gratifying to hear of her prosperity and welfare, and that it would afford him great pleasure to visit her immediately, did not his agricultural cares just at that period present an insurmountable obstacle. His letter closed with the most affectionate epithets.

On receiving her brother's letter, Mrs. Gray felt, as the writer of it intended, that she must depend upon herself; and, at her son's earnest solicitation, she decided to remove at once to New York. Preparations for their departure were immediately commenced, and the young man set out in advance of his mother and sister, to return to his business, as well as to prepare a home for them when they should arrive.

After Mrs. Gray had settled all her business transactions, she packed up her little remaining furniture and sent it on to her son, while she and her daughter remained for a few days with a friend, to rest and compose themselves.

"Now," thought Mr. Brown, "is my opportunity ;

I'll make my dark-eyed beauty another offer ; I've not spoken with her since her father's death ; I know she'll be mortified to see me now that her poverty is so well known." Filled with these thoughts he determined to pay Miss Gray a visit, and to make another offer of his august personage, confident that he would not then be refused, as the appendage of his wealth was so much needed.

Entering the house at which he had ascertained Miss Gray was staying, he awaited her presence in the drawing-room ; and, while he did so, he became almost excited in anticipation of her enthusiasm and delight at the proposal he was soon to make.

When Isabella received Mr. Brown's card she was sitting with her mother in her chamber.

"Alexander Brown !" said she, looking at the card. "I think I'll not see him, mother."

"Just as you please, my dear."

"I have not met him for a long time," said Isabella, "I hoped he had forgotten me ; but I presume the object of his visit is to express his sympathy for us, as we are soon to leave. Yes," said she, rising to depart from the room, "I'll see him,—I'll see any one who respects my dear father's memory sufficiently to induce him to offer sympathy to his afflicted family," and thus saying, she descended to the parlor. After the usual salutations, and both parties had seated themselves, Mr. Brown opened the conversation by saying :

"I have heard with deep regret, Miss Gray, that you are soon to leave us."

"Yes," replied Isabella, "my mother and myself purpose leaving to-morrow morning."

"Does your brother intend making New York his residence?" asked Mr. Brown.

"He inclines to do so," said Isabella, "and I think most probably will."

After further general conversation, Mr. Brown remarked, "I have called, Miss Gray, for the purpose of laying an injunction upon your departure at present."

"I hope not, Mr. Brown," rejoined Isabella; "I hope nothing will prevent our speedy departure, for it is quite important that we join my brother."

"I trust I may be able to offer you such inducements as will incline you to waive the necessity of joining your brother so speedily."

"Oh, no, Mr. Brown, I think that is not possible," said Isabella, in a somewhat excited manner; for she began to apprehend what might follow.

"No! Suppose," said he, with a self-confident manner, at the same time taking a seat on the sofa beside Isabella,— "that I again offer you my hand, my heart, my all?" and, looking her full in the face, he added, "which I most sincerely do, Miss Gray. Will not that be an inducement to detain you; or, if not to detain you, to insure the promise of your return?"

"No, Mr. Brown; I regret that I am under the necessity of again declining so great an honor."

"No honor can surpass your merits, Miss Gray; allow me to assure you of my unbounded admiration."

"Pardon me, Mr. Brown, but justice to you, as well as to myself, requires that I should not deceive, but deal

frankly with you; and I prefer that, from this time forth, you will relinquish all hopes of obtaining my hand; for, I assure you, were you to receive it, it would be unaccompanied with the treasure which every man must desire to possess in a wife."

"The heart?"

"Certainly."

"But might I not hope to win that afterwards?"

"Love must precede the nuptial rite, or it shall never have my sanction."

"May you not be already engaged?" asked Mr. Brown; for he was not ignorant of Mr. Williams' attentions to Isabella, though he had never before supposed they had thought of marriage.

"No, sir, I am not engaged,—and I am frank in saying that I shall never enter into a matrimonial engagement until my heart can accompany my hand."

To Isabella's great delight, for she desired to close so uninteresting a conversation, Miss Gray's friend entered the room at that moment, without any intention of intruding. The interruption, however, terminated the interview, and Mr. Brown departed, to reflect over the disappointment of another refusal.

View the matter as he would, in all its varied forms, he could not fathom the cause of this second refusal; and finally he dismissed it from his mind, with the belief that Miss Gray was too much occupied with her affliction to give the subject proper reflection. A dogged, obstinate perseverance when opposed, was Mr. Brown's prevailing trait of character, and he still consoled himself with the hope of future success.

"I have not heard you speak of your visit from Mr. Brown, my dear," said Mrs. Gray, after they had retired to their room for the night.

"He came to negotiate for the purchase of a wife."

"Ah!" said the mother, smiling at her daughter's coolness—"could you not come to terms?"

"Oh, yes—no difficulty at all in that. I think he is satisfied, by this time, that his money can never buy me while it is in his possession. His very great beauty and his money are the ruin of him. His vanity is past endurance. Money occupies the first place in his thoughts, and he fancies it to be more powerful than it really is,—he thinks it can take the place of the dearest emotions of the heart; but it cannot with me. If I ever marry, it will be a man whom I can love, respect, and be happy with. Money is a great object to us, at present, I very well know, but I cannot be guilty of such profanation as to marry for that alone."

"You are very right, my dear," said Mrs. Gray, "I am happy in hearing you advance such true principles."

While Mrs. Gray and Isabella were occupied, on the morning of their departure from Cincinnati, in numberless and nameless preparations requisite for a journey—and especially so in this instance, as they contemplated a permanent change of residence—Dinah, a very old colored servant, who had been in Mrs. Gray's household for many years, entered the room.

"Oh, mammy! I am very glad you have come to see us once more before we go," said Isabella, as she gave the faithful old woman her hand.

“Yes, Missis,” said Dinah,—tears almost choking her as she spoke—“Miss Bella, can’t you ’suade your ma to take de old woman along?”

By this time Isabella had seated herself on a lounge, and placed her dear old nurse by her side.

“Mammy, we would like to take you with us,” said Isabella; “but you know we cannot, now. I thought you had become reconciled, and were willing to be left.”

“I thought so, too, Missis; but I can’t, and there’s no use in trying.”

Isabella used her most powerful arguments to induce her to be content; for she was well satisfied she would be more comfortable in her new home than it would be in their power to make her, provided they had the ability to take her with them; but her persuasions were lost, for mammy would not think of being left behind.

Mrs. Gray had heard the conversation between them, and, although she had promised herself and Dinah, that if it were possible, when they were again settled, she would send for her—for she was as reluctant to relinquish her care of the faithful old woman, as the latter was to be left—yet she had doubts and fears of her ability to fulfill that promise before Dinah should have done with the things of earth; for she was now very old and becoming quite infirm. She had been for many years a free woman, and having accumulated a very comfortable support, Mrs. Gray had procured a good home for her; but her dear Missis’ home was all the world to her.

Mrs. Gray seated herself near her daughter and



Dinah, and spoke encouragingly to her, saying, "Dinah, you must try to be happy; it is your duty."

"Bless your heart, Missis, I did try, and I prayed to de Lord to keep me from wanting to go with my dear Miss Bella, who I brought up from a little baby. And dere's Massa Harry, too, he'll miss dis chile, I know. But I can't keep from wantin' to go and live wid em, no how."

"But you know I told you that, if I possibly could, I would send for you."

"Oh, no! oh, no!" said Dinah, shaking her head, "dese eyes will neber see Missis again."

"Oh, yes, mammy," said Isabella, cheerfully; "you must not be so desponding. Just think of the pleasure you will enjoy in my letters."

"Will you write den to ole mammy, when you're gone, Miss Bella?"

"Certainly I will, Dinah. I shall write you very long letters, and write them so that you can read them yourself. So you must cheer up, now, and not feel bad."

"Well, Miss Bella, I will try an' be cheerful. Yes, Miss, Dinah will try her best."

"It is time to have the baggage taken down," said Mrs. Gray, looking at her watch, as she rose to prepare for their departure, the time for which was now at hand. The hurry and confusion consequent upon a departure leaves but little or no time for reflection, and not unfrequently causes the long dreaded "good bye" to be said with unexpected composure. So it was with Mrs. Gray and Isabella. They took a hur-

ried leave, were conveyed to the railway station, and, when seated quietly in the cars, which were progressing rapidly toward their new home, they felt their haste and excitement was over for a time; and, drawing their veils more closely, to conceal from each other the sad emotions which had taken possession of their hearts and minds, they remained silent for a long while.

Mrs. Gray's mind reverted back to the freshness of youth, when she first made her home on the banks of the lovely river that was now fast receding from their view. In almost every thing which had contributed to beautify and adorn the grounds, she could trace her father's taste and skill. In the pleasant grove adjoining the house, she first listened to the whispering of love from him whose voice was now hushed forever; with him and her dear parents she had there enjoyed pleasant walks day after day; there, year after year, had she refreshed herself by admiring nature's beauties, and held communion with those she loved.

But she dared not, even in imagination, enter the house which had been for so many years a happy home. It would not do. She must buckle on her armor with fortitude; stern reality was before her, and she must not falter. He who was ever near to participate in her joys and sorrows, had passed away, and all that was dear in the name of home had vanished with him. But the mother's heart quickly whispered, "Not all; oh! no, not all. Beside me here sits my darling child, a bright jewel in my gloom. 'Tis for her I most grieve, and for my darling boy; they have

lost their guide and counsel. Oh, God ! leave not the widow and the fatherless, I beseech thee."

Such was the train of reverie and reflection in which Mrs. Gray indulged. Isabella knew less of the past ; but it was not altogether forgotten by her. Her home was associated with her childhood, and a happy one it had been ; with her youth, which was pure, intellectual, elevating and lovely ; with her dear young friends, whose affections were interwoven with her own, like the tendrils of the vine. In her estimation there was a halo of sanctity around the memory of all that had been admired and enjoyed by him who was far away in a distant land. Why could she not forget him ? She had tried. He had never said he loved, still she could not doubt it. " But why did he leave me thus," thought she, " without one hope to cling to ? No matter ; I'll cherish the love I cannot forget, and,

" Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy."

The future, to Isabella, was not so dark and foreboding as to the mother. She had the advantages of buoyancy of youth, as well as her mother's firm fortitude to rely upon ; change, also, lent its aid to encourage " bright hopes of the future to overshadow the past," and life to her was not altogether sad.

On arriving in New York, they were conducted at once to their new home, a small dwelling in Brooklyn, in which their furniture had been already arranged. Henry Gray had chosen this location on account of its cheap rent, as well as its immediate proximity to his

place of business in New York; and, arranging it to look as much like their old home as possible, he took his mother and sister to it with feelings of great sadness.

As they drove from the terminus of the railway through the crowded thoroughfare, and across the ferry, Mrs. Gray observed a deep gloom on her son's countenance, and asked him if he was not well?

"Perfectly well, mother."

"I think you are not as much delighted to see us as we are to see you," said Isabella, playfully.

"You are mistaken, Isabella, I am very happy to see you; but I am fearful you may be disappointed in your house, it is so unlike the one you have left." Just at that moment the dust, or something else, seemed to obstruct his sight, which made it necessary for him to use his handkerchief.

"Oh, no, my son, you must not give yourself any fears, for we are well armed against disappointments."

By this time they had reached the door, and, on entering the house, which was a small two-story wooden tenement, of somewhat ancient construction, with two small parlors, two chambers, and a basement, which served the purpose of a kitchen, Isabella went immediately through it, to gratify her curiosity—her mother and brother following. She was delighted with everything, and thought it was very convenient, as well as pleasantly arranged. "We have furniture in abundance," said she; "but I must go and see my piano;" and again they all returned to the parlor, for the purpose of examining the instrument. It was opened, inspected,

and its tone tried. "I am surprised," said Isabella, "that it is so little out of tune;" then rising from the stool and closing the instrument, she turned to her mother and brother, saying, "Well, I think we have a nice, cosy little home, and we shall be so much happier here, together, in this unpretending house, than we should be if separated, although we occupied a palace."

"I am very happy that you like it so well," said Henry, "for it is the best I could find, without going a long distance from the ferry; and that would not answer our present income."

"You have been very successful, my son. I like the house very much; it is just the house, and in just the place, for us to study economy; and that is what we intend doing."

"That you may do for the present; but wait until I am a rich merchant."

"Ah, my son, I am glad to see you so hopeful."

"Yes, mother, you shall not always be poor if I live and have my health."

After they had become settled in their new home, and had forgotten the fatigue of their journey, the mother, son, and daughter were one evening seated around a small centre-table, the ladies occupied with their needles, the young gentleman with his evening paper. Isabella broke the silence which had prevailed for some time, by saying—"I would like to lend a helping hand in procuring the means of our support."

"What would you do?" asked her mother.

"I could give music lessons. I feel myself competent for that, and you know it pays better than almost anything a lady can undertake."

The mother and daughter again relapsed into silence, both being busily occupied with their work and their thoughts, of which the latter were probably the most active; for who that has been unexpectedly aroused to self-reliance, has not experienced the great activity of mind which accompanies it? How often do we see instances of the mind, like the body, becoming sluggish through the enjoyment of a peaceful, calm, luxurious indolence? From persons in that state of lethargy we hear expressions like these: "Oh, I never could do so;" "I certainly could not exist through such troubles," etc., etc.; but, when the avalanche of affliction bursts upon its victim in some one of its varied forms, we see the mind rise superior to surrounding circumstances, and witness an energy in its struggles which it had never before exhibited.

Such was now, in some degree, the energy which Isabella felt, and desired to display; but she was forced, for the time, to yield to the solicitations of a high-minded, noble-hearted brother.

Henry Gray, though in years a mere youth, not numbering yet twenty summers, was matured by the changes which had come upon his household, into a sensible, active man. He was neither strong in constitution, nor yet sickly; but the buoyancy of youth, and the energy of manhood, made the path of life seem bright before him; and his pride was gratified with the idea that his mother and sister, the two beings he most loved, should yet enjoy ease and happiness through his instrumentality.

After finishing the perusal of his paper, he turned

to his sister, and asked "What it was he had heard about music lessons?"

"I said I should like to give them."

"You must not think of it, Isabella."

"Why not, Henry? You know our means are very limited."

"I know they are, but I have been thinking the subject over, and I find that, by the rigid practice of economy in every respect, for two years to come, we shall have sufficient means to last that length of time; then I can command a salary which will do away with any such necessity for exertion on your part. I confidently hope that my salary will be increased next year; should it be, I shall consider myself not only fortunate, but favored."

"Yet, Henry, it does not seem right for us to depend so much upon you, a young man, just entering into life."

"Isabella, if you regard my feelings, I beg you will not press the subject any further,—certainly, not for the present; wait until there is a more imperative necessity for your exertion, if that time should ever come; I shall commend you for it."

"Very well, Henry, just as you say; I will turn maid of all work, then, and economize in that way."

"'A penny saved is worth two pence earned,' must be our motto now," said Henry.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE LOVE-LETTER.

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“’T was indeed a goodly dream ;  
But thou art right to think it was no more ;  
And study to forget it.”

*Ion.*

Go to, base slave,  
How durst thou tell thy master  
That his cheek looks blanched, and pale ?

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WE will now introduce our readers into a lawyer's office, in the city of San Francisco, California, where we shall find Mr. Robert Williams at his table, busily engaged in writing. A client is seated in front of him, to whom he occasionally addresses a few words. Mr. Collins, the senior partner, is seated at another table, occupied in a similar manner. Some half a dozen clients in waiting make up the company, each impatient for an opportunity to communicate his tale about the troubles and annoyances which thwart his ambitious desires to gain the prize, for which he left the home of his choice and affections. These gentlemen have come to seek professional counsel, and their impatience is readily discerned in their restless, uneasy countenances.

Mr. Williams having completed the contract he was drawing up, folded it carefully, and handed it to the gentleman who sat beside the table.



"What fee, sir?" asked his client.

"One hundred dollars," answered Mr. Williams.

His client drew his pocket-book from the inner pocket of his coat, and, taking from it the amount required, handed it to his lawyer, saying, as he did so, "Mr. Williams, I would like to retain you in the suit we have been speaking of."

"I shall be very happy to attend to it for you, Mr. Frelinghuysen; for I am confident that, if the case be as you represent it, there can be no doubt that you will gain your suit."

Mr. Frelinghuysen, still holding his wallet in his hand, asked what would be the retaining fee?

"One thousand dollars," was the answer.

A check for that amount was immediately laid upon the table, for the purpose of securing the professional services of Collins and Williams, in the case of Frelinghuysen *vs.* Taylor, on the issue of which a very large sum was pending.

As the client rose to depart, he was requested by his counsel to call in two days from that time, when he hoped to have it in his power to make some favorable communication.

Mr. Frelinghuysen, now fairly initiated into the preliminaries of a lawsuit, left his lawyer's office with bright anticipations of recovering, by the strong arm of the law, a just claim, which would insure him a fortune for life, and enable him to indulge in his innate propensity for speculation. Whether, at the close of the suit, he entertained the belief that law and equity were synonymous terms; or, whether he ever

ascertained what law really was, when divested of the mysticism of technicalities with which lawyers envelope the science, has never been ascertained ; but this much is certainly known, that, as he rapidly walked to his place of business, he thought over the many opportunities, then known to him, of reaping golden harvests, if he had but the money he was now seeking to recover by legal means.

Mr. Williams gathered up the hundred dollars, which he had earned in about one hour, and folded his thousand dollar check carefully and thoughtfully, as the postman entered and laid upon his table several letters, which had just arrived by the morning steamer. The business correspondence of the firm was very considerable ; but Mr. Williams was prevented from an examination of his letters by another client, who then presented himself. Just at that moment he observed his Cincinnati paper. Ah ! thought he to himself, here is my paper from Cincinnati, I must look at it ; and, tearing off the wrapper, he scrutinized the record of deaths, which almost universally is first sought by all sojourning in a distant land. Imagine his great surprise on beholding, at the top of the column, the name of his much esteemed patron, Mr. Gray.

Relieved at length from the routine of his daily duties, Mr. Williams, in the retirement of his private apartment, recalled to mind the happiness he had enjoyed in the hospitable residence of his departed friend. He it was who first distinguished him from the multitude of those similarly circumstanced—toiling and struggling to obtain rank in the legal profession—

and extended to him a helping hand, as well as the cordial hospitality of his family circle, when those of his own blood, having almost countless wealth at command, stood aloof—barely recognizing, with cold ceremony, the claim which ties of consanguinity gave him upon their notice.

“But he is an orphan; a good education will insure him fortune and distinction if they are rightly used, and he will be the better for self-reliance.” Such having been the conclusion of the orphan’s friends, how natural was it that he should cling with affection to the memory of him, who had learned by experience to sympathize with the oppressed.

Mr. Williams’s retrospect of past events naturally led him into anxious conjectures about Isabella Gray, the treasure ever dear to his heart—“Where is she,” he soliloquized? “Surrounded no doubt by friends who will supplant me, even in her memory. No, that cannot be; it is unjust, ’tis base even to think thus of her, when her every look and act has told me what her heart could not conceal. Upon her sincerity I would willingly risk worlds, were they at my command. Yes, yes, she loves me—I cannot doubt it; and, where am I? here, in this far-off land, away from all I love and adore. If I am ever to seek her hand, why not now? now is the time she most needs my sympathy; and now she shall have it, without longer delay.” Seating himself at his writing-table, with pen in hand, he leaned back in his chair, and again resumed his soliloquy. “The more fastidious will say, I am in too much haste. But it is not so; I have

long considered the proposal I am now about to make, for the hand of her, whom of all others I most love. I may be repulsed; yet, the sooner I know my fate, the better. I am confident that, with my present prospects, I shall soon have the means of placing her in a position equal to that in which she now moves, and which her whole character well qualifies her to maintain—that of a lady; besides, let what will result from my proposition, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have made an honest effort to secure the wife of my choice.” With this conclusion to his reflections, he commenced a letter as follows:

“SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,”

*October 12th, 18—.*

“MY DEAR MISS GRAY—

“It is with emotions of deep sorrow that I have learned of your recent and great bereavement, from the columns of a ‘newspaper,’ just received. I hasten to extend to yourself and family my most sincere and heartfelt sympathy, with many regrets that I am not near you, to administer, if it were possible, in some slight degree, by kind acts and attentions, to the alleviation of your present sorrow.

“My acquaintance with your beloved father has extended over a considerable space of time, though but a small portion of it has partaken in any degree of intimacy. That, during a small portion of my life I had access to his society, and that too, in his own

home, where he enjoyed relaxation from the cares and anxieties of his profession, is to me a consolation and source of happiness beyond my powers of description.

“My dear Miss Gray, it was he who first conferred upon me the happiness of your acquaintance. I now ask you to decide whether it shall still prove such. Dearest Isabella, I offer you my hand and my heart, pledging my best endeavors to secure your happiness through life. Grant me my most urgent request: then truly will I be blessed. May I not indulge the hope that you will listen to my petition?

“Oh, how cold and formal are letters! Could I but see you at this moment, idol of my heart, to convince you, not merely by words, but by every look and act, of my earnest sincerity, and to hear from your own dear lips your final decision, what an agony of suspense I should be spared.

“But I shall wait in patient hope until I learn, from your own pen, the decision of my future fate; during which time I am sure you will pardon me for entertaining the fond idea that you will be mine; an event which I cannot, will not, doubt, as it alone will be the realization of my most ardent aspirations after earthly bliss.

“With regard to my future prospects and plans, I only wait your acceptance of my poor self, to lay them all before you. Cheer me with the news that I have found a place in your heart, dearest, and all my fond anticipations will soon become realities. With a sincere prayer that favorable gales may speedily waft to me

your answer, I beg to be considered an humble and devoted lover.

“Sincerely and respectfully,

“Your attached

“ROBT. WILLIAMS.

“MISS ISABELLA GRAY, Cincinnati, Ohio.”

This letter was written and dispatched not long after the removal of Mrs. Gray and her daughter to their new home in Brooklyn; but, the writer not being aware of that fact, the letter was directed, as already observed, to her former residence.

After Miss Gray had twice refused the honor of an alliance with Mr. Brown, the latter became in some degree suspicious of her attachment for Mr. Williams; indeed, personal observation had made him aware that she was more than pleased with him. As a counter-balance, he had always consoled himself with the idea that Mr. Williams was poor, and therefore would not think of marriage—at least for the present; and again, the frequent accounts of the fearful ravages which disease was making in the country of his rival's adoption, induced him to think, to hope, and at times firmly to believe, that Robert Williams would never again set foot on his native shore.

A belief that these demoniac desires were the subject of expression, or even of mature reflection, must not for one moment be entertained. Like vague fancies, they flitted through the brain of a selfish man, whose greatest happiness was to conquer. Fully appreciating the power and fascination of wealth, and its

influence, in the absence of more exalted ones, he felt confident that he would eventually win the prize. How humiliating the thought, that there exists a being who can nourish such fiendish desires, possessing the intellect and form of man—a type, as we are told, of his Creator! In his own mind, Mr. Brown could scarcely define the reason why he so anxiously scrutinized all the California news; yet, though not entirely ignorant himself, he desired to keep others so.

About one month after Isabella had removed from Cincinnati, Mr. Brown was taking a morning walk, when he heard the newsboys crying their papers, and announcing the arrival of a California steamer. Immediately repairing to the post-office, he ascertained that the mail had arrived that morning, but was not yet opened for distribution. He continued his walk, and returned just in time for the delivery of the first letters, but found none for himself. He then requested that all letters for Mrs. and Miss Gray should in future be put in his box, adding, that such was their desire.

“A letter has just arrived for Miss Gray,” said the clerk. “Do you receive it, sir?”

“Yes,” answered Mr. Brown, confusedly. “Yes; oh, yes; I do receive them. She wished me to forward her letters.”

“I can do that, sir; there is no necessity to take it from the office for that purpose.”

“No; very true. But I think I will take it, however, and enclose it with another package I have at my lodgings.”

Here we have an illustration of the maxim, that one falsehood leads to many.

Mr. Brown received the letter, and immediately left the post-office. On reaching the street, his first impulse was to open it, as he observed it was post-marked "San Francisco;" but his suspicions as to who was the writer in some measure increasing his fears of being detected in the base act of purloining a letter, he hastened with rapid strides to his hotel.

As he entered his private parlor, his colored servant, John, made his appearance at another door, leading from his bed-chamber, and called his attention to Mr. McPherson's card, which he had just laid upon the table.

"I can't see him, John; tell him I'm engaged," was the master's order, given in an excited manner.

"Shan't I say you are ill, Massa?"

"What the d—l do you mean, sir? Ill! I have said nothing about being ill. Go, and obey my order."

"Yes, sir;" said John, and as he turned to leave the room, he added, "I thought you looked pale."

As John opened the door to pass out, there stood Mr. McPherson, with his hand raised to knock for admittance. Passing John, he walked directly into the room, just as Mr. Brown was preparing to draw the letter from his pocket.

"Ah! good morning, Brown," said the unconscious intruder; "I've come to ask you to take a drive with me."

"No; not this morning, McPherson; I don't feel in the humor for a drive; I have just returned from a walk."



"No! What's the matter?"

"Nothing, whatever, only I do not wish to drive, this morning."

"Well, Brown, I do not wish to alarm you, but you look d——d pale. Are you ill?"

The question suggested to Mr. Brown a speedy method of relieving himself from his unwelcome visitor, who was usually in the habit of boring him with long sittings, and he resolved at once to act upon it.

"Yes; I think I am slightly ill. John has just expressed great fears, on account of his master looking pale; but it's only an attack of sick headache, which will soon pass off with sleep."

"I was not aware that you suffered from such a disagreeable malady."

"Yes; occasionally; not often."

"Well," said Mr. Brown's volatile visitor, as he rose to leave, "the sooner I am gone the better, if you have a sick headache, for I know by experience what it is. But, Brown, you don't look like it; you really do not look as though you had a headache."

"Why not?"

"Your eye's too bright. You are not going to have the cholera, are you?"

"Oh! the d——I take the cholera, and you, too, McPherson. Between you and John you will frighten me to death. Leave me alone for a time, and you'll see I shall come out brighter than ever."

"Ha, ha," laughed Mr. McPherson, as he left the room, "I think there is no doubt of your recovering from this attack."

On his way down the stairs he thought to himself—  
“What’s the matter with the man? I never saw him so nervous and excited. I fear he is more ill than he thinks himself. I’ll step back and ask him to drive with me this evening.”

Without knocking, he opened the door leading into Mr. Brown’s room, calling out as he did so, before he had scarcely time to see the occupant, “Brown, will you drive—Ah! the d——l; I see it all now. Ha, ha! you’ve got a love letter; but don’t be in such a hurry to conceal it; I don’t wish to read it—only hope the lady writes pleasantly. I returned for the purpose of asking you to take a drive this evening; but it will require a longer time than that for you to recover from such a severe shock as the reception of a love letter must produce.”

“You draw your own inferences. I have not said it was a love-letter.”

“Ha, ha! pretty good, Brown; got a love-letter, and tried to conceal it. Well, well, you are farther gone than I ever knew you to be before.” So saying, with a hearty laugh, he left his friend, without entertaining a suspicion of the contents of the letter in question, or of the confused, distracted state of mind the man was in, whom he had attempted to rally about a passion he did not possess.

“I’ll bolt my door,” thought the pale Mr. Brown, “and see if I can read this letter without interruption. It has already cost me more annoyance than I would be willing to endure again for the best woman living;” and, suiting the action to the thought, he bolted his door,

again drew the letter from his pocket, read it and re-read it, then laid it upon the table, and, reclining in his chair, was for some time lost in thought. Yes; even the rich man must do his own thinking, occasionally. Better, perhaps, in this instance, had it been, like most of the duties of the indolent wealthy class, committed to those who are paid—it might have been better done.

Mr. Brown was now alone, but the letter on which his eye rested seemed, to his guilty mind, an embodiment of the individual who wrote it.

“Well, Mr. Williams, I have not the least doubt but that you think yourself sure of your bird”—mentally ejaculated the mean-spirited man, as he held an imaginary conversation with the author of the letter before him; “but you will find yourself mistaken for once.” “He does not,” soliloquized Mr. Brown, “seem to feel very great confidence that his tremendous passion is reciprocated. Yes;” and smiling at the thought, “such love is truly tremendous; a d—d sight more tender than I shall ever work myself up to; too soft for me: but I’ll show him that gold is more powerful than his tender passion.”

Then, taking the letter, and again carefully perusing it, in his excitement he exclaimed aloud—“It’s well he has patience to wait for an answer! Methinks it will be a long time before his much desired ‘favorable gale,’ wafts him one to this.” Then rolling up the letter in the form of a lamp-lighter, he lighted it with a match, and held it between his thumb and finger until it was nearly consumed, when, apparently struck with some

new idea, he took a cigar from his case, and lighted it with what he thought were the last remnants of Robert Williams' love-letter.

As he watched the smoke of his Havana ascend, and mingle with the surrounding atmosphere, he fancied he could trace in it an emblem of the love he had just discovered. It would, he thought, evaporate and leave no trace behind.

What a short-sighted being is man—to deceive himself with the vain belief that he holds the destiny of his fellow-man within his puny grasp. He may exhaust his utmost energies for the accomplishment of his selfish purposes; yet he is forced to submit, whether willingly or not, to the fiat of Him who ruleth with justice and with truth.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE BUSINESS LETTER.

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“ Perhaps I was void of all thought:  
Perhaps it was plain to foresee,  
That a nymph so complete would be sought,  
By a swain more engaging than me.  
Ah! love every hope can inspire;  
It banishes wisdom the while;  
And the lip of the nymph we admire,  
Seems for ever adorned with a smile.”

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*Wm. Shenstone.*

MR. BROWN passed the following night in a very restless manner. He saw that his plans had not been sufficiently matured, or rather, that he had no plans, having yielded too readily to impulse, by taking the ill-fated letter himself from the post. This in itself might lead to detection, and he could not fully decide in his own mind what would be the most effectual means of preventing it. Not that he was very much distressed with the idea of not being able to win Miss Gray's approbation of his more tender passion, but the thought that he should be foiled in his undertaking, and be forced to surrender to a man whom he had ever regarded as his inferior, increased his determination not only to intercept all communications between the parties, and

thereby obstruct their plans, but so to direct his own course, as at last to secure the prize.

The next morning he arose, and made his toilet with artistic care, during which repeated consultations of his mirror gave him such renewed assurance of his personal attractions, as to increase his confidence in his ultimate triumphant success. "Fool that I was," thought he, "to have given myself so much trouble about that letter, I had better have let it taken its course. Isabella Gray would not have granted the writer's petition, while she thinks she has me in her train; oh, no! she's not given me up yet—only refused me twice—of course she expects to see me in New York, and at her feet, before the year ends. And she shall, too, if I cannot bring her to terms in any other way; but I'll wait a few months, until she has freely partaken of the bitter cup of poverty; then I am sure of success.

"Yes; I understand her; she's just like all beautiful women; she will keep a man dancing attendance for a year or two, meaning to marry him all the time. They have such contemptible ideas of us, and such gloriously exalted ones of themselves, that, for the sake of making magnificent martyrs of their dear selves, they must say 'No' some half dozen times, when in reality they mean 'Yes.' Well, I'll indulge her fancy; but, when she is Mrs. Alexander Brown, I will reward her for her repeated refusals, by telling her of this letter; for, although I have not the least idea that she would have listened to the proposal it contained, she'll be annoyed at having been kept so long ignorant of the conquest.

“No indeed;” continued he, pursuing his reverie, if I had thought of it sooner, and more deliberately, I would have let the letter go, and thus escaped my present position; but what is done cannot be recalled, and now the question is, how to avoid the disagreeable consequences. I’ll write a letter to his honor, Mr. Williams, announcing my engagement to the ‘idol of his heart,’—no, that won’t do, my acquaintance will not warrant such intimacy. Oh, the d—l! I feel nervous this morning, I must take time to decide upon this matter.” Ringing the bell, he then ordered breakfast—a meal he usually partook of in his own room.

The morning meal disposed of, the rich man had nothing to occupy his time but to promenade his own apartment, or do whatever else might gratify his caprices. He was pacing his apartments, undecided as to what he should do, when his man John entered with the morning mail. The sight of letters caused a nervous tremor to run through his frame, but it passed as quickly as it came, leaving no impression upon his conscience.

“John, order my carriage to be at the door in half an hour,” said Mr. Brown, looking at his watch. He then seated himself, read his correspondence, and occupied the remainder of his time, while waiting for his carriage, in perusing the morning paper, which seemed to him unusually insipid—containing nothing of sufficient interest to enchain his attention.

When the carriage was reported to be in waiting, Mr. Brown moved languidly down stairs, entered a most superb carriage, drawn by a fine pair of coal-black horses, covered with highly-ornamented trappings—

the coachman and John, who officiated as footman, being in livery. He gave an order to drive to ——— hotel. On arriving there John was just proceeding with his master's card to Mr. McPherson; when the door was opened, and that individual himself walked down the steps. Seeing his friend Brown's carriage, and being at the same moment informed, by the presentation of his card, that he purposed a call upon himself, he immediately stepped to the door of the carriage, but was compelled to thrust his head inside, before he could discover that it contained an occupant.

"Ah, Mr. Brown, how are you?" said Mr. McPherson, shaking hands very cordially, "your carriage being closed, I discredited your man, when he said you were here."

"Step in, Mr. McPherson; I have come expressly for you to take a ride with me."

"Ah, thank you; but why the d—l did you come with such a magnificent turn-out as this? I shall hardly know how to support so much stateliness. Oh, I beg pardon,—how's the head?"

"All right, never better," was the answer.

"Only the effect of one of Cupid's darts contained in the letter, I presume. You are undoubtedly prudent in not exposing yourself in an open carriage, this chilly morning; you might take cold in the wound."

"Well; never mind, get in; we will settle those matters afterward;" and, with a promise of returning in an hour, which would enable him to fulfill a previous appointment, McPherson seated himself in the carriage, and the two gentlemen of leisure rode through the



fashionable avenues—the admiration of some, and the envy of others.

Mr. McPherson called himself a citizen of Boston ; but he spent so large a portion of his time in traveling, that he could be considered only a nominal citizen of that city. Apparently he was a man of wealth, but in temperament and disposition very unlike Mr. Brown. He was gay and volatile in temperament, kind and generous in disposition, though in personal appearance his inferior.

But that was of no consequence to him, as his pursuit was pleasure, which he never failed to find ; for his motto was, that the agreeable incidents of life were equally mingled with those of an opposite character, and that if the former were sought with due diligence, they would ever be found.

The acquaintance between the two gentlemen had been of short duration ; but, in consequence of having originated in a railway car, it had matured more rapidly into intimacy, than years of a more ceremonious intercourse would have insured.

The few days which Mr. McPherson spent in Cincinnati were sufficient to render him an extensive debtor to Mr. Brown's hospitality. By him he was entertained ; by him he was introduced to some of the first society ; by him he was shown the lions of the city ; and, consequently, he enjoyed his stay at Cincinnati vastly. It was one of Mr. Brown's prominent traits, to show great attention to strangers, provided they were of the élite, and there was a fair prospect of a reciprocation of

the civility, should an opportunity present. Such he thought Mr. McPherson to be,—although two greater opposites seldom meet.

On Mr. Brown's return to his hotel, after dropping his friend at his, the thoughts which had disturbed his peace of mind the previous night, and, indeed, ever after he had destroyed the stolen letter, returned with increased intensity. The danger of detection must be avoided, and he resolved to make the attempt, cost what it would. Taking his pen and opening his portfolio, he wrote as follows :

“CINCINNATI, *Nov. 20th*, 18—.

“ROB'T WILLIAMS, ESQ.,

“DEAR SIR:—I am very desirous to make some investments in California, and I know of no one whose judgment I can more implicitly rely upon, for the required information, than yourself.

“You will confer a favor by informing me whether money is much in demand, at what rates it can be loaned, and upon what securities. Also, if investments in real estate can be profitably made. If after hearing from you, I should decide upon investing in that State, either in real estate or otherwise, I hope to be fortunate enough to secure your services in arranging my business.”

Having progressed thus far, he stopped writing, and silently but carefully perused what he had written; then he re-read it aloud. “Well,” said he to himself, “I think that will do, so far, but I rather think he'll

find that, by the time I receive his answer, I have concluded not to make investments so far from home: but stop! let me see! here's another difficulty; he knows very well that my money is all invested in bank stocks: that will create suspicion. He may, however, think that I have some spare income, which I wish to invest out of the ordinary channel—I think he will; perhaps I had better mention it;" and, taking up his letter, he again perused it. "No," thought he, "there'll be no use in that, its perfectly natural he should think so. Yes, that's all right,—I'll proceed." He continued his epistle thus:

"There is very little news of general interest in Cincinnati to communicate, with the exception of one painful piece of intelligence—the heavy loss your profession, and the community at large, have sustained in the recent death of 'Wm. Gray, Esq.' I am not certain that he was an acquaintance of yours, but presume, of course, that you must have known him professionally. His merits are too deeply engraven on the hearts of his friends, and of the public generally, to need any eulogy from me. I understand that he has left his affairs in an embarrassed condition, which is of but little moment to his surviving family, for I intend, before the year closes, to lead Miss Gray, my already affianced bride, to the altar.

"You will, I am confident, excuse my familiarity to you, who are almost a stranger—but my delight, in my future prospects, knows no bounds; and I desire

myself to communicate such joyful intelligence to each and every one.

“I suppose we need not anticipate the pleasure of seeing you very soon in our city, as I learn that, beside being well suited in your present location, you are accumulating wealth with great rapidity.

“With many kind wishes for your prosperity and happiness,

“I remain truly yours,

“ALEXANDER BROWN.

“ROBT. WILLIAMS, ESQ.

“San Francisco, Cal.”

After being again carefully read over, and pronounced perfect, the letter was sealed, and sent by John to the post-office, with directions to hasten, as the California mail would close that evening.

Mr. Brown then felt perfectly at ease; he thought he had never, in all his life, written so clever or so shrewd a letter, and, now that the task was completed, he experienced a sensation of relief. It now became necessary for him to endeavor to accomplish what he had just announced as a fact; but his confidence in the power of wealth made him feel assured that he would lead Miss Gray to the altar as his bride, within the time specified to Mr. Williams.

Instances of such implicit confidence in the influence of wealth to accomplish any one particular object, as is here displayed in the character of Mr. Brown, are

not of very frequent occurrence ; although we almost daily see individuals relying upon that power, which wealth alone has given them, to oppress their fellow man. We bow to the idol of wealth. The moralist tells us it is all vanity, but still we kneel and worship at its shrine. A blessed gift it is to him who appreciates it, and uses it under the guidance of reason, but not to him who makes it his polar star.

## CHAPTER VI.

NEW RESOLVES.

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“Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,  
Just o’er the verge of day. The shifting clouds  
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,  
In all their pomp attend his setting throne,  
Air, earth and ocean smile immense.”

*James Thompson.*

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ABOUT one month after the death of Henry Gray, the mother and daughter were seated in their snug little parlor, and, though lonely, yet everything wore a home-like aspect. Nothing of especial moment had occurred to them since the reader left them in the freshness of their grief, save the interest which humanity ever takes in the relief of the distressed—their mental ills, however could not be so readily administered to; but, with the aid of physical rest, which they were much in need of, owing to their prolonged vigils, they were enabled to recover their usual calmness and energy.

It was a beautiful evening in June. Mrs. Gray laid aside her needle, lighted the evening lamp, and, resting her elbow upon the table by her side, reclined her head upon her hand. Her countenance wore a calm, serene expression, which indicated that her meditations

were not on things of earth. She looked with the eye of faith upon the glorious scenes present to the view of the dear departed. There seemed but a speck of time between herself and that blissful state, wherein she would be forever reunited with those she loved; where the defects of this natural life would be exchanged for the purely spiritual enjoyments of worship and adoration, around the throne of the Most High. And, oh! the rapturous thought, that when that better land was reached, there would then be no more separations, no more trials to endure, no more death-bed scenes of those she loved, to witness, gave her renewed strength and energy, and confirmed her resolution to bear up under her present trials.

Isabella sat by a window looking toward the west; a book was open upon her lap, her arms were folded, and her full, dark eyes intently gazing upon the scene before her. The stillness which had reigned for some time, almost typical of the dwelling of the dead, was broken by her uttering, in a manner which partook more of the form of thought than of speech—

“What a glorious sunset! Have you observed it, mother?”

“No, my dear, I have not,” said the mother; and then, rising and advancing to the window, she continued, “Yes; it is very fine, and indicates milder weather.”

“With a larger horizon, that scene would be magnificent,” said Isabella. “How very much dwellers in cities are deprived of the beauties of nature! I never

witness a gorgeous sunset, that I am not reminded of a scene my dear grandfather described to Henry and I, when we were quite young children. You know he was very happy in description?"

"Yes, very. But where did he locate the scene?"

"Upon the prairies, during his first visit to this country. He had been traveling all day through the beautiful open prairies, with no companion but his guide, a half-breed Indian. They stopped for the night beside a small, but pure, and refreshing stream, the land around which was slightly undulating, and covered with a small copse of trees. During the day the sky had been overcast, and the aspect of the clouds at times very threatening, which, he said, somewhat depressed his spirits; but, as the hours flitted by, the sky became clear, rich, broken clusters of clouds were spread carelessly along the line of the western horizon, and the sun sank to his nightly rest behind a misty haze, which enabled the beholder to feast his vision upon the resplendent gorgeousness of the great orb of day. The brilliant rays, reflected upon the previously sombre clouds, imparted to them a golden illumination. My grandfather gazed for some time in silent admiration upon the scene, and then turned his eyes to the east, where lay a cluster of clouds more beautiful than anything he had hitherto seen, which in almost every other place, except the open prairie or the boundless ocean, would have been hidden from view. The sun's rays had shed over this cluster a brilliancy fully equal to that of the more immediately surrounding strata. Never shall



I forget with what enthusiasm he related that scene. He said the eye could not rest upon any object in nature that was not lovely. The vast prairies, studded with belts of woodland, were resplendent in variegated green; the long, rich prairie grass, beautifully interspersed with flowers of every hue, was bathed in a flood of golden light; and the cool, refreshing streams, meandered through the whole like veins of molten silver. After partaking of the wholesome repast prepared by his guide, he watched until the gorgeous scene receded from view, and gave place to night, when, under the starry canopy of heaven, he sank to rest, with the green turf for his pillow, and the musical murmuring of the pure crystal stream to lull him to sleep."

"I do not think I ever heard him speak of that particular incident," said Mrs. Gray.

"Probably not; you know he was very fond of entertaining us with stories when we were small, and none pleased us more than the incidents of his travels."

"He was a very interesting traveling companion, had a happy faculty of adapting himself to circumstances, and was an enthusiastic admirer of nature."

"Yes; and most happy and delightful in description. Whether it was his lucid account of the sunset, which far surpassed my powers of memory, or the emotions produced in my mind by his sleeping upon the ground in that vast open space, with no couch but his blanket, no canopy but the heavens, and not a companion who could sympathize in his feelings, I cannot determine.

But I find it one of the most agreeable associations with which my childhood, and the memory of my dear grandfather, are connected."

"Dear, good man," said Mrs. Gray, in a calm tone of voice, which told her capacity of composedly contrasting the present with the past. "How very little he could have anticipated the future for his child, when he first traveled in this country."

Isabella remained silent for a moment, unwilling to divert her thoughts from those pleasant days of childhood; but, observing that her mother, though calm, was depressed, she endeavored to comfort her with a view of her past happy life. "Your life, my dear mother, has, until the last year, been less sad than that of most persons of your age."

"Very true, Isabella—that may be one reason why my present sorrows press upon me with such severity."

"I think," said the daughter, in a tone of encouragement, "that having received such great consolation in all our troubles, we ought not for one moment to despond. We have never experienced the want of a friend in the time of necessity; and, when I think of the invaluable treasure I possess, in your guidance and counsel for my inexperience, the future seems to present no obstacles."

Mrs. Gray fearing to trust herself by replying to the noble and generous expressions of her daughter, remained silent until self-possession had gained its supremacy, when she remarked, "that their dependenc was then mutual."

"Yes," replied Isabella, "mutual in one respect, but of different natures. I shall lean upon you for advice, and I beseech you not to discourage me, when I say that you must trust to me for exertion."

"'Tis truly grateful to an afflicted mother's heart to hear such sentiments from an only child," said Mrs. Gray. "God be praised! with such blessings I am not, I will not, be sad, and sink into gloomy despondency, by contrasting the present with the past. It is now quite dark; suppose you light the lamp, my dear, while I close the shutters?"

The lamp was promptly lighted, the shutters closed, and Mrs. Gray and her daughter, seated beside the small centre table, occupied themselves with their needles, while their minds, relieved by their recent conversation, felt an impulse toward greater activity.

The mind, when burdened with an all-absorbing topic of any nature, is apt to lose its elasticity, and to become inactive, dormant, and incapable of accurate perception; such was, in some degree, the condition in which we found Mrs. Gray and her daughter at the opening of this chapter.

The pleasing description of the golden sunset had served as a magnet, to draw their thoughts for a short space of time into other channels than those in which they had recently flowed.

As the two ladies silently and busily pursued their tasks, Isabella informed her mother that she had, for several days, been reflecting upon the best course to pursue to obtain some music pupils.

"I have been thinking of the same thing," said Mrs. Gray, "for there is no use in deceiving ourselves with regard to the necessity of making efforts for our support."

"No, not the least. But the greatest difficulty which I see at present, is in obtaining the pupils. I am inclined to make some inquiry of our Rector, Dr. Montgomery. He may know of some person who would give me a pupil upon whom to try my skill in teaching. I think I would be willing, at first, to take one or two for a small remuneration."

"I think you will make a mistake, Isabella, if you adopt that course. You are doubtless aware that persons are more desirous of obtaining the best teachers in the department of music, than is perhaps the case in any other department of education. If you put your terms low you will be passed by as an inferior teacher; and I should very much regret to see you depreciate your musical talents."

"Oh, no; I would not wish to be so understood: but I am not altogether confident of my capacity to teach. You know I have never given an hour's instruction to any one in my life, and the thought of so doing seems to open a new era in my existence: it makes me timid."

"You have no cause to feel timid; I have perfect confidence my dear in your capacity for teaching music, but——"

Here the conversation was interrupted by a summons from the street-door bell. Isabella, opening the door,

greeted the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, the gentleman whose name she had mentioned but a few minutes previously. She extended to him a cordial welcome, and ushered him at once into the parlor.

"How do you do, Dr. Montgomery? we are very happy to see you," said Mrs. Gray, as she rose and offered him her hand.

The Rev. gentleman was very soon engaged in an agreeable conversation with the ladies; for the object of his visit was to cheer them up, instead of nourishing the grief already too apparent in the sunken eye and wan expression of countenance traceable in both mother and daughter, but more especially in the mother.

Dr. Montgomery was deeply interested in Mrs. Gray and Isabella, as he had learned that their means of support were limited. This information had not been obtained directly, but from general observation, aided by hints from Dr. Barton. That the persons before him were ladies, he did not in the least doubt; that they had seen better days, was evident from the remains of luxurious furniture, and the several elegant and tasteful articles which decorated the otherwise humble apartment. He desired not so much to know who they were, as in what way he could administer to their comfort, after ascertaining whether they in any degree required such aid.

"Did I understand you to say, Mrs. Gray, that you had no friends in the city?" asked Dr. Montgomery.

"I said there were none who, from our limited acquaintance, we should be at liberty to call friends.

We have not been in the habit of visiting New York as frequently as Philadelphia and the southern cities. My son's preference for this city, on account of its business advantages, was our reason for coming here."

"If there are any individuals in New York, or elsewhere, whom you would like to see, I beg you will allow me the pleasure to acquaint them of your wish."

"Thank you, Doctor, I feel obliged for your kindness; but it is my own wish, and also that of my daughter, to live in a retired manner."

"That is quite natural, madam, while suffering from your recent bereavement; but I fear that close seclusion from the society of your friends will impair your health."

"There are other reasons, Dr. Montgomery, why we should desire retirement," said Isabella, in a tone of voice which showed the effort it cost her to divulge their embarrassed circumstances; "necessity compels us to regard our time as money, for the period has already arrived, when it is requisite for us to depend upon our own exertions for a maintenance."

"Ah, indeed! Miss Gray; I esteem myself most happy in being permitted to have your confidence, as I may be of some assistance to you; and I know of nothing which will contribute more to my gratification than the ability to do so."

"Thank you! thank you!" exclaimed both, at the same time. "We were just conversing upon the subject as you came in," continued Isabella.

"Then may I not consider myself fortunate in my selection of the time for my visit? for perhaps I can aid you in maturing plans for the future."

"I am the favored one this time, Dr. Montgomery," rejoined Isabella, "as I had just determined to make personal application to you for advice, and if agreeable to yourself, for a word of recommendation also."

"Certainly, Miss Gray, anything I can do for you will be a pleasure: but what have you thought of undertaking?"

"I consider myself fully competent to give instruction in music, and also in drawing; but I should select music, it being more congenial to my tastes, and affording a better compensation."

"Have you ever given lessons?"

"Never."

"My daughter is fully qualified to give instruction in music," said Mrs. Gray, "as her education in that department has been more thorough than in any other ornamental branch—her inclination encouraging it. She has been taught by German masters of the first acquirements; and she not only performs well, but she has also a scientific knowledge of music."

"A very flattering recommendation, Miss Gray," said Dr. Montgomery, smiling.

"But you observe that it comes from a mother," replied Isabella.

"Who can judge of your qualifications better, or even as well as your mother, Miss Gray? She has closely observed your instruction, and watched your progress

with a solicitude which none but a mother can feel. I have not the least doubt of the correctness of her recommendation, and would be delighted to place my daughter under your tuition, were she sufficiently advanced in years."

"What is her age?"

"Five years."

"She is rather too young to commence the study of music; but perhaps you may know of some other persons who would favor me?"

"Miss Gray, will you allow me the pleasure of hearing you perform? I will then be at liberty to say that I have listened to your execution, whether, or not, I am capable of criticising it."

"Certainly; with pleasure," said Isabella, as she opened the piano for the first time since the evening previous to her brother's last illness, when she had played for his gratification.

Oh! what a torrent of sorrowful recollections rushed upon her as she touched those keys. She thought of the many evenings during the past winter which she had spent at the piano, with her brother by her side, and of the solace which music had afforded to both. Memory reverted back to the life of ease and enjoyment which she had passed, amid the elegance of refinement, enlivened by the delights of music. All was now changed.—"No; not all," she thought, as her fingers lightly touched the keys of the piano; "my dear old instrument shall yet restore me to myself."

Dr. Montgomery was so much enraptured with



Isabella's execution, that he did not discover her deep emotion. He listened with evident delight, and assured her that he would immediately interest himself to procure her pupils. "I do not," said he, "at present think of any one whom I could name; but you know we gentlemen are frequently dependent upon our wives for suggestions. I shall consult with Mrs. Montgomery, and endeavor to see you again very soon."

"We will not tax your time by requiring you to come to us," said Isabella; "but, with your leave, we will call at your study, on any day, and at any hour you may please to name."

"Suppose," replied Dr. Montgomery, "I appoint tomorrow morning at twelve o'clock. Will that be convenient?"

"Perfectly so," Isabella answered.

Dr. Montgomery then bade the ladies good-night. His residence being distant only an agreeable fifteen minutes' walk, the time was employed by the generous-hearted man, in mentally considering how he could best be of service to the persons whom he had just left. There would, he thought, be no difficulty in procuring them aid, from individuals whom he knew would esteem it a privilege to contribute liberally, were they acquainted with the circumstances. Yet that would not do. It would not be acceptable to persons so ready and desirous to help themselves. "What an example," thought he, "do they present to those similarly situated, who render themselves helpless and inefficient, from the feeling that they cannot, because they have not

so been educated, perform any labor ! no ; it won't do to extend charity to them ; certainly, not for the present. But Miss Gray shall have pupils, if it is in my power to obtain them for her ; and I should not be surprised if the mother also taught music, or some other branch of education. She will not be idle. I am confident she will turn her cultivated intellect to some useful account."

Dr. Montgomery having arrived at the door of his residence, we will leave him to mature some plans for their benefit, with the aid of his wife's counsel, who, though an invalid, was never deaf to the wants of others.

Turning our attention once more to Mrs. Gray and Isabella, we find them again seated by the centre-table, busily engaged with their work, which had been resumed after their visitor had taken his leave. Both mother and daughter remained for some time silent—thought was too busy to permit conversation. Plans for the future, had been definitely determined upon ; Isabella felt that the first step had been taken and that her debut before the public, or at least a small portion of it, would test her capacity in various ways. Her fitness for the mere teaching of music gave her less anxiety, than her ability to deal with human nature in the capacity of an instructor. She recalled to mind what her own teacher had frequently related, of the difficulties he encountered in the discharge of his duty, and of the constant vigilance necessary to avoid a sacrifice of principle. Strange, vague, and undefined ideas flitted

through her brain, until her mother interrupted the silence by remarking, "That it was very gratifying to have secured the interest of so influential a gentleman as Dr. Montgomery.

"Yes; he is as valuable an auxiliary as I could desire," said Isabella; "except it be some one of the prominent teachers, or professors. They are the proper ones to apply to, for a recommendation."

"Perhaps you are in too much haste," said Mrs. Gray. "A brief delay will enable you to procure satisfactory recommendations from your own teacher, who is so well known in New York, that his endorsement would be all you need desire."

"I have thought of that myself. Yet, if I can obtain a few pupils, I will make a commencement: good instruction is, I believe, as well, if not better, appreciated in this city, as in any other, and upon reflection I feel a strong inclination to rely upon my own merits. If I possess the necessary qualifications, they will become apparent; if I have them not, then certainly I shall not be entitled to recommendation from any person."

"Well," replied Mrs. Gray, "perhaps you are right. I have no fears for your ultimate success, if you can but make a fair beginning."

"Mother," said Isabella, "I have been thinking of calling on Mrs. Crane, who, you may remember, sojourned a short time in Cincinnati."

"I do not recollect her, my dear."

"Oh yes, ma; I think you can; she was paying a

visit to Mrs. Stanley, and was an exceedingly pleasant, as well as agreeable lady. You gave a small party for her entertainment, and during the evening she expressed herself to be highly delighted with my execution of that piece of Schubert's which was your favorite.

"Oh, yes, my dear, I remember her; but have you her address?"

"Yes; Henry gave it to me. She resides in the upper part of the city."

"I think I would not seek her patronage. Our present poverty might be considered by her a sufficient reason for declining to renew the acquaintance."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sorry to say, that I do. Were we surrounded by the appendages of wealth and position, Mrs. Crane would undoubtedly extend to us her hospitality; but should you request her to interest herself in your behalf, she would shun the responsibility. Besides, I do not think we have sufficient claim upon her notice."

"I am inclined," replied Isabella, "to think you may be correct in your surmises. Several instances which have occurred since our misfortune, tend to strengthen that belief. Once I was unable to comprehend how such things could be possible; but experience is an excellent teacher."

"Yes, indeed, Isabella! Experience not only points out to us the foibles of others, but, also, gives us such lessons as may be of great future use to us, if properly observed. I may do Mrs. Crane an injustice. If she knew we were residing here, it is possible she

might take an interest in you ; but I do not consider it very probable. And, as to her society, we have neither the time nor the inclination to indulge in ceremonious visiting, which would, undoubtedly, be the extent of our intercourse."

"Very true," said Isabella, thoughtfully, at the same time giving utterance to a long-drawn sigh, which attracted her mother's attention and comment.

"My dear," said Mrs. Gray, "I am sorry to hear that ; if you sigh for Mrs. Crane's society, I will not raise a single obstacle to your enjoyment of it."

"Oh no, ma," replied Isabella ; "I was not thinking of Mrs. Crane, but of the dear friends with whom I have been associated during the bright and happy days which have passed away. How I long for their society ! At times, I think that its refreshing influence would be, in the language of the beautiful and sublime imagery of Scripture—'Like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'"

## CHAPTER VII.

## A BROTHER'S SYMPATHY.

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“Night is the time for dreams ;  
The gay romance of life,  
When truth that is and truth that seems,  
Blend in fantastic strife ;  
Ah! visions less beguiling far  
Than waking dreams by daylight are !”

*James Montgomery.*

Knit close the bond of love  
In the hearts of little ones,  
While gathered around the domestic hearth ;  
That cares and separations,  
In after life, may not close  
The avenues to sympathy.

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THAT night, when Isabella Gray retired, her mind was agitated by mingled emotions. She thought over the plans then maturing, for obtaining a maintenance for herself and her dear mother. How to commence her duties, whom to apply to for aid and advice, she had hitherto considered the greatest obstacles to her undertaking ; but these were now removed by the kind interference of Dr. Montgomery. The sweet words of sympathy and encouragement which he had already

spoken, gave her greater confidence that the promise of Scripture would be fulfilled in their instance, and that they would not be forsaken in their affliction.

“What a comfort,” thought Isabella, as she lay on her bed, wakeful and restless, “would it not have been to dear Henry, if he had possessed yet greater confidence in the promises of the Inspired Volume. How inclined we are to forget the sufferings of the dying, in our sorrow and grief at their departure. It is natural that it should be so ; but, I wish I could think less of his anguish at being cut down so early, when just on the verge of manhood, with all the honors and distinctions of life opening so brightly before him, and cheered on by the hope of being our protector and comfort, as well as of maintaining the honorable reputation his father bequeathed him. But, thank God ! those hours of anguish gave place to more peaceful ones, rendered so by the confidence that we would be cared for ; and I must not forget how much our promises tended to procure him that peace of mind. His last request must not be neglected. He said he had confidence in our pledges ; and if his blessed spirit is now near me, and can discern these secret thoughts, it shall see that my promise is again renewed. No ; I will not grieve for his loss ; but, turning my thoughts and energies to the duties which are now presented, I will try, by the help of God’s grace, so to live that I may hope to join him.”

With such composing thoughts she sunk to sleep, only to pass from wakeful thought into spirit commu-

nion with the creations of dreamy slumber. She wandered back in fancy to the cherished home of her childhood; was again with her dear father, felt his warm caress, and saw his smile of approbation given to her childish sports. Henry, too, was there, participating in all that constituted her delight. But, as is usual in dreams concerning those who have passed from earth, there was an appearance of solemnity in all their movements, and they did not speak; still, Isabella felt a sensation of happiness in their presence.

Her dream continuing, she advanced, by one of those sudden transformations which in dreams alone can be accomplished, to the maturity of early womanhood, when life seems redundant with love and hope. She thought of the happiness she would possess could she have one being whom she could love, who would be constantly by her side, to sympathize with her in her admiration of this beautiful world.

The ecstatic thought took the form of reality, and the being of her fancy stood beside her, clothed with a form of perfect manliness in an attitude of admiration—not of Nature's beauties, but of her own beautiful person. He did not speak of love; but the gentle look, the sweet cadence of voice, and the care with which he anticipated every wish, were unmistakable evidences of a deep and abiding passion.

The scene changed, and again she was alone—but the potent charm of love had left its impress upon her mind, and filled it with vague, yet blissful ideas. Then a demon spirit appeared to her, and spoke of love; but



his look was meaningless. She fled his presence ; but he pursued, in the form of a fiend, until he was suddenly confronted by a dazzling star, which turned his course, and she was once more left alone. Life now assumed another aspect—it was no more a commingling of love, and hope, and joy ; yet the remembrance of that manly form dispelled the terror produced by the demon spirit, and the sweet tones of his voice were still floating through her brain, when she was aroused by her mother's voice, saying :

“Isabella, my dear, you sleep later than usual this morning ! I hope you are not ill ?”

“Oh no, mother. Is it very late ?”

“Not very,” answered Mrs. Gray ; “but much past your usual hour for rising. But do not hurry yourself unnecessarily ; I only desired to assure myself that you were not indisposed.”

Still fearing she had not elicited the entire truth, Mrs. Gray interrogated her daughter whether she had slept during the night.

It being Isabella's custom to represent everything in its brightest colors to her afflicted mother, she at first answered in the affirmative ; then, recollecting herself, she said :

“No, mother ; I was awake during the greater part of the night, but I have had such a refreshing sleep this morning, that I do not feel the worse for it.”

“I am happy to hear you say so,” replied the mother, as she left her daughter's room, to make ready their frugal meal.

Mrs. Gray devoted the same care and attention to the arrangement of her table that she had been accustomed to during her previous life, notwithstanding it was prepared by her own, instead of servants' hands. Isabella usually relieved her mother of a great portion of the duties relating to the culinary department; but on this particular morning she had temporarily abandoned the realities of life, and was gliding, on the wings of imagination, through fairy land.

The two ladies had just seated themselves at the breakfast table, when the postman made his appearance at the door with a letter, a rather unusual circumstance; for the correspondence of two lonely females, who, reared in luxury, have, by the reverses of fortune, been compelled to earn their own subsistence, is not usually very extensive; and it very frequently happens that correspondents experience a difficulty in finding time to answer the letters of such individuals. Some think it unprofitable labor; though they would not, on any account, give utterance to such an idea. Others fear that it may remind their unfortunate friends of happier days; and, consoling themselves with the reflection that they are actuated by motives of generosity, they also refrain from writing. But there is yet another class, though small in number, who are regardless of everything beyond the gratification of giving expression to their deep and sincere feeling of sympathy, and of obtaining intelligence concerning their dear friends—made doubly so by adversity. Whether the letter just arrived is from the latter, or

from either of the before-mentioned classes, a perusal will decide.

“A letter from uncle James,” said Isabella, as she looked at the superscription, and handed the missive to her mother.

When Mrs. Gray had finished her meal, she took the letter, which had been laid upon the table beside her breakfast-tray, slowly removed the envelope, and commenced reading as follows :

“MY DEAR SISTER :

“With deep feelings of sympathy for yourself and my dear niece, I have just learned, by your short note, of the sudden death of your son. Whether it was unexpected to you I am not informed, but it was so to myself and family.

“That he should have been taken from you at a period when he could so materially have aided you in your depressed circumstances, renders his loss truly afflicting. But I am confident such are not your greatest reasons for lamenting your bereavement ; as I am fully satisfied that your energy and activity, combined with Isabella’s efforts, will not fail to supply any deficiency.

“Should you be unsuccessful, do not fail to inform me, that I may be afforded an opportunity of contributing to your support, although, as you are aware, my family is numerous, and, in order to give them present advantages, as well as to lay aside a trifle for misfortunes, my abilities are strained to the utmost. My income is not near as large as I could desire.

“ We can now discern the error your husband committed in not laying aside a portion of the liberal income his profession yielded him. True, he had the satisfaction of using his money beneficially to himself, and in many instances which have come under my own observation, very advantageously to others. Perhaps it is the better course, after all, to let each day take care of itself; but, in reference to my own family, I have not that confidence in their capacity to help themselves that I have in you.

“ I would again remind you of my desire that you should inform me of your necessities, if urgent. Permit me to suggest the propriety of Isabella doing something at once. She can, to my knowledge, give instructions in several branches. In music she is highly qualified, as also in drawing; and if she could obtain a situation in a large female seminary, she might give lessons in both departments. Dancing she could also teach admirably, for a more graceful dancer I never saw. By giving lessons in all of these branches at the same time, she might succeed in establishing herself in a very lucrative business.

“ It will give me great pleasure to make investments for you, where your money would be perfectly safe; which is a very important consideration to ladies who do not understand the minutiae of such transactions.

“ I desire that you will furnish me with all the details of Henry's sickness, as you may remember that you were not very explicit on that subject. I shall endeavor to visit you some time during the autumn; meanwhile, I wish you both comfort and prosperity.

"My wife and daughters desire to be lovingly remembered to yourself and Isabella.

"I remain,

"Your affectionate brother,

"JAMES HENRY FITZGERALD."

Having finished the perusal, Mrs. Gray folded the letter, replaced it in the envelope, and again laid it upon the table.

"That is a remarkable letter," said Isabella; "I hope, mother, you will not fail to preserve it."

"Of course I shall not. But, my dear, it is just such a letter as I expected to receive from your uncle."

"Why so, ma?" inquired Isabella. "Uncle James invariably exhibited the kindest feelings towards us, which we have always reciprocated. I must say that I should have expected more sincere sympathy than this letter indicates."

"Since your uncle declined availing himself of the opportunity of retaining our homestead in the family, notwithstanding his ability to do so, and his knowledge of his parents' attachment for the place, I have not looked for any assistance from him."

Isabella then took up the letter, opened and read it carefully through, remarking upon the different passages as she did so. "Ah, yes," said she, "my uncle has great confidence in our combined efforts."

"Yes," said Mrs. Gray, with an air of indifference.

"Suppose we were unsuccessful? it is doubtful whether he would know it," said Isabella, continuing to read. "He is correct when he says that his 'income

is not so large as he could desire.' I have no doubt Stephen Girard would have said the same. But here is one thing, mother, which I do not like."

"What is it, my dear?"

"He has no right," said Isabella, in a spirited manner, "nor is it kind in him, to cast any reflections upon my dear father's name; and if I were you, I would resent it.

"That would be sheer folly, Isabella. When your uncle James becomes satisfied that we can take care of ourselves, he will find less to complain of. Your father was a truly noble-minded man, and what your uncle can say of him will have no influence with me, nor will it, I hope, be of any weight with you. We have a lesson to learn which is only taught in the school of poverty; and that is, to listen to and bear with many unpleasant remarks, which an independent position would have spared us the knowledge of."

"Well, mother, I don't know how that may be; I am afraid I shall not be a very apt scholar."

"Submission to injustice, my dear," said Mrs. Gray, "when we can help ourselves, is a moral wrong; but to notice such remarks as you allude to, would as much outrage my sense of dignity, as they demean him who made them. I do not think, however, that your uncle intended to cast any censure upon your father. He is only giving cautious expression to a fear that responsibility may rest upon him; for, you may observe, he endeavors to palliate the course which he has just censured, by alluding approv-

ingly to the amount of good which your father effected during his life."

"Yes; I know he does," said Isabella. "I know it is far better to look at the matter in the way you do; but I cannot tolerate any animadversions on the conduct of my father. He must not only entertain an exalted opinion of me, but also consider me very industrious, to be able, at one and the same time, to give instruction in all the branches which he considers me qualified to teach. I suppose," said she, laughing, "he would have me fill up the intervals between my music or drawing lessons, by teaching a select number of pupils how to dance. But, mother, he gives me an excellent recommendation, does he not? I think I must publish this letter. Then he is so kind in offering to invest for us! Ah," continued Isabella, in a sarcastic tone, as she re-folded the letter, "you are, no doubt, a very kind and benevolent man, uncle James; but I am inclined to think you will not be called upon very soon to make investments for me. However, I am positively gratified that just such a letter as this came to hand this morning."

"Then," said Mrs. Gray, "you ought to be obliged to your uncle."

"Well," returned Isabella, "I am."

"But why particularly specify this morning?" asked Mrs. Gray.

"Because," answered Isabella, "I felt a mental oppression, caused by thinking of the errand I have to perform this morning. I felt languid, and experienced

an absence of self-confidence; but now I am aroused to a fearless indifference, which betokens more certain success."

"It will never do," said Mrs. Gray, rising, "to pass all the morning at the breakfast-table, discussing your uncle's letter, if you intend going out."

"Will you not go with me?" asked Isabella.

"Yes, my dear, if you wish it;" was Mrs. Gray's answer, as they both commenced removing the breakfast dishes, and putting the house in order.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## A VISIT TO THE RECTORY.

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“But deep this truth impressed my mind,  
Through all his works abroad,  
The heart benevolent and kind  
The most resembles God.”

*Robert Burns.*

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AT the time appointed, Miss Gray, in company with her mother, presented herself at the door of the Rev. Dr. Montgomery's residence. It was one of those balmy mornings in spring, when every natural object assumes a garb of loveliness; and the ladies were invigorated by the delightful, refreshing breeze, which was wafted from the beautiful bay, over the busy, bustling crowds thronging the various avenues and thoroughfares. Although they felt its balmy influence, it was unheeded by them until Dr. Montgomery, on entering his parlor, where they awaited his presence, bade them a cheerful “good-morning,” and remarked that it was a very fine day.

“Very fine,” replied Isabella.

“We have enjoyed our walk exceedingly,” said Mrs. Gray, who just began to realize the benefit she had derived from exercise in the balmy spring atmosphere.

"Out-door exercise is a luxury to all, but particularly so to those who have passed the greater part of their lives in the country, where the air is pure and bracing."

"I hope Mrs. Montgomery is enjoying the beauties of this fine morning," said Isabella.

"I am sorry to say that she is too much of an invalid, at present, to leave her room; she is, however, desirous of making your acquaintance, and requested to be informed of your arrival."

"It would give us pleasure to know Mrs. Montgomery," said Isabella; "but we did not look for an introduction, because she is so much of an invalid. We requested to be shown directly to your study, but the servant informed us that you were engaged with company."

"Yes; I have just left a brother clergyman in my study, preparing a sermon." Dr. Montgomery then rang a bell, which was very promptly answered by the servant, whom he directed to "ask Mrs. Montgomery if she would be pleased to see Mrs. and Miss Gray."

A beautiful little girl, about four years of age, came to the door and peeped in; but observing strangers, she turned to depart.

"Come in, my daughter; come in Dora;" said Dr. Montgomery, "the ladies wish to see and speak to you."

The little Miss, whose lustrous black eyes and raven hair increased, by contrast, the pallor of her cheeks, entered the room and stood beside her father. Dora,

with child-like readiness, was soon on intimate terms with Isabella, and Mrs. Gray had engaged in an interesting conversation with Dr. Montgomery, when the servant announced Mrs. Montgomery's request to see the ladies in her room. They were immediately ushered into the invalid's presence by Dr. Montgomery himself. "My dear," said he, "here are Mrs. Gray and Miss Gray, whose acquaintance I have been so desirous for you to form."

Mrs. Montgomery extended to the ladies a cordial welcome, and requested them to be seated. Few inquiries were made regarding the invalid's health; for the sunken eye and troublesome cough were sufficient indications that consumption had fastened upon her for its victim. Mrs. Montgomery was, however, very cheerful, and able to converse with comparative ease.

"My husband tells me," said she, addressing Isabella, "that you purpose teaching music, and are desirous of obtaining pupils."

"Yes; nothing would gratify me more; and my almost total unacquaintance with the details of business transactions, is the only excuse I have to offer for intruding upon the privacy of your sick chamber."

"No apology is necessary, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Montgomery. "So far from regarding your visit as an intrusion, I am really glad that you have called upon me."

"I had thought of advertising for scholars," continued Isabella; "but advertisements of that character are so numerous, that I feared my application would pass

unnoticed ; and, when Dr. Montgomery kindly offered to use his interest for me, I concluded to defer a public appeal for the present, or until such time as he could consult with you. I did not, however, anticipate the pleasure of an interview with yourself."

Dr. Montgomery being summoned to his study, the ladies were left alone ; which enabled Mrs. Montgomery to converse about her past life with less restraint than she would have felt in her husband's presence.

"Miss Gray," said Mrs. Montgomery, "it was in compliance with my particular request that my husband brought you to see me. By experience I have attained a knowledge of the trials attendant upon your present undertaking ; and if I can in any way assist you by an encouraging word, or otherwise, I do assure you I know of nothing which can give me greater gratification.

"I was educated, and, until my twentieth year, lived in the very lap of luxury and ease : loving parents anticipated every wish, until the period of my mother's death, when my father, who was in delicate health, had not sufficient nerve to rally from the shock. The result was, that in less than one year I was an orphan."

Mrs. Montgomery evinced so much emotion while narrating her past misfortunes, as to alarm Mrs. Gray ; who, fearing the ill effect it might have upon her health, kindly, though urgently, admonished her not to dwell upon the past.

"Oh no ;" said she, as a smile illumined her beautiful face, and she wiped away an unbidden tear, "these

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reflections do me no hurt now; I love to dwell upon the sadness of those days; they are ever dear to my heart on account of their associations with the departed loved ones, and with attachments then formed. When my husband informed me of your intention to teach music, I was very much gratified to learn from him that you purposed calling here, as it would afford me an opportunity of seeing you, and giving you that encouragement which I so much needed under similar circumstances."

"You are truly kind," said Isabella, "to express such an interest in an entire stranger."

"Pray do not give me credit for more than I deserve," replied Mrs. Montgomery; "the sentiment with me has become one of common humanity, from my having been forced to feel so deeply the want of encouragement. I had wealthy relatives who, in a very matter of course sort of way, offered to give me a home. I appreciated their kindness; but, knowing too well that it would be a home uncongenial to my feelings and tastes, I declined the offer, preferring to depend upon my own resources. My education and habits all tended to produce an independence, which nerved me to make the effort, regardless of opposition."

Here Mrs. Montgomery's cough interrupted her narrative for a short time; but, after recovering from her exhaustion, she continued, "When I announced to my friends that I purposed teaching music, they vehemently remonstrated against it; my uncle, who was my principal adviser, being more opposed to it

than any of the others. But, having already taken the preliminary steps toward the accomplishment of my design, I went quietly on, despite their opposition, with a consciousness that I was acting upon correct principles; of which I was still more convinced, by the success which more than rewarded my efforts, and which far surpassed my most sanguine anticipations."

"That is truly encouraging," said Isabella.

"I was fortunate, Miss Gray," continued Mrs. Montgomery, "in very generally obtaining good pupils, and in families who were capable of appreciating proper instruction. But, let me assure you, that the vocation of a teacher in any department of education, when you have to contend with the varying dispositions and whims, both of parents, and children, is not destitute of its trials."

"I am fully aware of that, Mrs. Montgomery," replied Isabella, "but it is my determination not to anticipate trouble, but to faithfully discharge my duty in accordance with my judgment. Beyond that I do not think I am responsible."

"You are right, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Montgomery; "if you adhere to those principles you may rest confident of success. An obstacle is presented to the immediate commencement of your operations—the summer being an unfavorable season to obtain pupils, as most of the citizens who can, retire to the country about this time."

"I am aware of that inconvenience," replied Isabella, "but I have no doubt some may remain. If I can do

no better, I can at least secure them for the fall and winter."

"Yes; that you could do," said Mrs. Montgomery. "If you would take a situation as governess, you could go into the country for the summer with your pupils, which would be far more desirable than remaining in town."

"It would be desirable, and agreeable in many respects; but," said Isabella, in a decided manner,— "I cannot leave my mother."

Mrs. Montgomery had thought it possible that Mrs. Gray might have friends, with whom she could pass the summer while her daughter was seeking their means of support; but, as she wished to avoid any inquiry into family matters, she did not broach the subject.

"You are quite right, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Montgomery, "in not wishing to leave your mother; and I will make every effort I can to procure you pupils immediately."

"Mrs. Montgomery," said Isabella, "in your delicate state of health it might be injurious to you to make any effort for me; and, therefore, if you would but direct me to some of your friends, allowing me to use your name, that would be all that our short acquaintance would entitle me to expect from you."

"Oh no, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Montgomery, smiling; "you know some friendships mature more rapidly than others, and I already feel that we are more to each other than formal acquaintances."

"You do me great honor," said Isabella.

"Not in the least, Miss Gray. I will write a note to a friend of mine, residing in the upper part of New York, who, I think, intends remaining in the city during the summer. She has three daughters, who are all, I believe, learning music. The last time I met her she told me her daughter's music master would pass the summer in Germany."

"Very probably," said Isabella, "she will desire her daughters to dispense with their lessons during his absence."

"No, I think not," replied Mrs. Montgomery; "for I recollect she regretted that they would be so long without instruction. What are your terms, Miss Gray?"

"One dollar per lesson," said Isabella; "but I would make a reasonable deduction if I had several pupils in one family. It would also depend upon their ages and attainments."

"You must not place your charges too low," said Mrs. Montgomery; "for you must remember that, if you get pupils at such distances that you are compelled to ride, your fare, by ferry and stage, will amount to a considerable sum. I am afraid you are not much versed in business," said Mrs. Montgomery, archly.

"That could not be expected," said Isabella; "but I think I am in a fair way to have the defects in that part of my education remedied, by a pretty effectual lesson of experience."

"Yes; very true," said Mrs. Montgomery; "but



let me make one suggestion. I have generally found it difficult to raise prices when once established. It is much easier to come down than to go up; therefore, I would suggest that, if you make your terms one dollar per lesson, you should neither change them nor make any deduction, either for new beginners, or for the larger number you may have in one family. What is your own experience? Did you commence taking your own lessons in music at reduced terms?"

"Oh, no, by no means," said Isabella. "The bills for my tuition were uniformly the same; but my teacher was an experienced man."

"I doubt not," said Mrs. Montgomery, "if I am not mistaken in your character, that you will prove as efficient a preceptor as those who have had more experience. When you direct your attention to the subject practically, I have no hesitation in believing that you will find it much easier than you now anticipate. Diligence, caution, and a thorough investigation of what you are teaching, will supply any deficiency in experience, and you will be surprised at the obstacles which can be surmounted by a determined will."

"Perhaps you are right, Mrs. Montgomery," said Isabella.

"I know I am," rejoined Mrs. Montgomery; "and I know, also, that a very large portion of the community will seek to obtain the benefit of your instruction on as low terms as they can induce you to give it to them, though at the same time they will not be any better satisfied in the end. I very much doubt whether they will even appreciate your services as well."

"I am certainly under many obligations for your timely suggestions, Mrs. Montgomery," said Isabella, "and I hope to merit them by a faithful discharge of my duty."

"No fear of that," returned Mrs. Montgomery. "Pardon me if I am too minute in my suggestions; but I invariably become so much interested in ladies who have the moral courage to grapple with the world in a business capacity, that I at once identify myself with their affairs."

"So I perceive," said Isabella, "and I sincerely acknowledge myself an obliged recipient of your kind instructions."

"Wait," said Mrs. Montgomery, in a jocular tone, "until you ascertain whether my desire to aid you proves beneficial."

Mrs. Gray had remained silent during the conversation between Mrs. Montgomery and Isabella, but not from indifference; far from it. She felt that her daughter must make an effort to advance in the world, and it was her wish that Isabella should act and think for herself, as she had full confidence in her ability so to do. The duty incumbent upon her as a mother was merely to aid and sustain her.

At this moment the servant informed Mrs. Montgomery that her physician was in attendance in the parlor. Mrs. Gray and Isabella immediately arose to take leave of their new acquaintance, whom they now regarded with more than ordinary friendship. Mrs. Montgomery gave them a pressing invitation to renew their visit unceremoniously, and promised Isabella that

she should receive as prompt information relative to her new enterprise as could be obtained. The ladies then bade each other "Good morning."

Descending to the hall, they met Dr. Barton, who was on his way to his patient. Mrs. Gray's double veil prevented her from seeing at once who it was, and she did not recognize their kind friend until she heard Isabella say—

"How do you do, Dr. Barton?"

"I am most happy to meet you, Mrs. Gray," said the doctor, as he passed from Isabella to her mother, assuring them both of the pleasure which this unlooked-for meeting afforded him. "I hope you are both quite well, this morning?"

"Thank you, Doctor, very well," was the prompt reply of both.

"How do you find my patient this morning?"

"I am unable to judge, by comparison, how her health is," said Mrs. Gray, "as this is the first time I have had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Montgomery; but she appears very ill."

"Poor lady!" said the doctor, with a sigh, "she is too bright to fade so early."

"I am inclined to reproach myself," said Isabella, "for permitting her to talk so long; although she did not, so far as I could discover, appear to be exhausted."

"No," said the doctor, "I have no doubt your visit has been of service to her, for she was desirous of making your acquaintance."

"My daughter, we must not longer detain the doc-

tor," said Mrs. Gray ; and, bidding him "good-morning," the ladies passed into the street, to retrace their steps to their lonely home, while Doctor Barton ascended to the chamber of his patient.

"Ah ! I see you have been transgressing, this morning," said the doctor, very cheerfully, as he entered the room, and took a seat beside his patient.

"How so, Doctor ?" inquired Mrs. Montgomery.

"I met company leaving you," replied the doctor.

"Oh, yes ;" said Mrs. Montgomery, "I thought I must see those ladies—my husband called on them last evening, and ascertained that their circumstances are such, that it is necessary Miss Gray should give music lessons in order to provide for their support. He made an appointment with her to meet him in his study this morning, to consult about some plans for procuring her pupils ; but I was so desirous to see her, that I obtained his consent to the transgression of your orders."

"You confess so frankly," said the doctor, very good humoredly, "that you have quite disarmed my resentment ; and, as I observe no ill effects, you may rest confident of pardon."

"Thank you, Doctor," replied Mrs. Montgomery, "just what I expected."

"How were you pleased with the ladies ?" inquired the doctor.

"Very much," said Mrs. Montgomery.

"It is painful," said Dr. Barton, "to think that a young lady of Miss Gray's cultivation and refinement, should be compelled to come before the world in a business capacity, is it not ?"

"Very painful, indeed," said Mrs. Montgomery, "but her cultivation has been of the right kind. Naturally possessed of a good mind, cultivation has regulated and increased its powers. She has marked out her course, and will perseveringly pursue it, if I am not very much deceived."

"No doubt of it," returned the doctor, "still, that does not lessen the difficulties she will have to contend with."

"They will be concealed in her own bosom," said Mrs. Montgomery, "and the world will be none the wiser."

"So much the worse," said Dr. Barton, "a trial that is endured in silence corrodes the heart with sorrow, and absorbs its life-blood."

"In some instances; Doctor, perhaps it does," remarked Mrs. Montgomery, "and with some temperaments. But I think you will find that those ladies fully appreciate the interest which the generality of those, who are termed friends, take in the affairs of the depressed, beyond merely listening to a recital of their distresses, for the purpose of discussing the matter in more enlarged circles, or of diffusing their information into such channels as will ensure its return to their poor friends."

"I am sorry that you take such a dark view of humanity, Mrs. Montgomery," said the doctor.

"I did not so consider it, Doctor," said Mrs. Montgomery, "I do not censure the public; we, as individuals, form the public, and I am not prepared to say

that we are altogether exempt from such failings. But what right, I ask, have we to expect the public to feel an interest in our behalf ? ”

“ Perhaps, not any,” said Dr. Barton ; “ but we are certainly entitled to claim the attention of our friends.”

“ Better to commune with our own heart, and a bosom friend, (not friends,) ” said Mrs. Montgomery, “ if you are fortunate enough to possess one ; and Miss Gray has an invaluable one in her mother.”

“ Yes, indeed,” exclaimed the doctor, “ there is very little doubt of their success. Mrs. Gray is in the prime of life, and possesses too much energy to be idle. But I do not understand why her brother, who is abundantly able, does not come forward and tender them aid.”

“ Ah, indeed ! is that so ? ” said Mrs. Montgomery.

“ So I learned from young Gray, during his last illness,” replied the doctor.

“ I know nothing at all of their family,” remarked Mrs. Montgomery. “ They have not spoken either to my husband or myself on that subject.”

The doctor then related as much of Mrs. Gray’s family history as he had received from her son.

“ Did I understand you,” asked Mrs. Montgomery, “ that there was a friendly feeling between the brother and sister ? ”

“ Perfectly so, as I understood Mr. Gray ;” replied Dr. Barton, “ but this brother has a high appreciation of himself, and is very ready to condemn all who are unfortunate.”

"I do not see the cause for condemnation in this instance," said Mrs. Montgomery. "Certainly, Mrs. Gray is not blameable for the loss of her husband!"

"No;" said Dr. Barton. "But I should infer that he attached censure to Mr. Gray, for not being more prudent, and making provision for his family."

"Oh yes, I see," said Mrs. Montgomery. "He quiets his conscience by censuring past errors, and overlooks present necessities. He ought to be told, as I was once, that we have nothing to do with yesterday—that being past, to-day only should claim our attention."

"He ought to be told," said Dr. Barton, quite warmly, "that it was his duty to have purchased his sister's home, and presented it to her, together with an independent annuity."

"That would have been very proper," said Mrs. Montgomery, "provided it were done in such a manner as would not cause the recipients to feel that they were indebted to the generosity of another. But if not thus delicately tendered, I would much rather ask charity at a stranger's hand. Admiring Miss Gray for her independence, I shall do all in my power to encourage her."

"But how is this?" asked the doctor, who, observing that his patient was becoming too much excited, thought it best to change the subject of conversation; "I had almost lost sight of the object of my visit. How do you find yourself this morning?"

"I passed a bad night, doctor," replied Mrs. Mont-

gomery ; "I was restless, nervous, and much troubled by my cough ; in fact, I could not sleep. I felt very ill early this morning, when I sent for you. It might have been fancy, however, for I am now quite myself again."

"I am, for once, inclined to give some credit to the beneficial effects of company," said Dr. Barton.

"And I feel satisfied that it does me no injury to converse moderately," said Mrs. Montgomery. "Suppose it does make me cough a little more than I otherwise should do, were I not to talk. It is only a momentary matter ; I know very well that my fate is sealed."

"You should not indulge in such despondency, Mrs. Montgomery," replied the doctor. "Great cures have been effected by the treatment I am now using in your case."

"No doubt," said Mrs. Montgomery, "in the primary stages of the disease cures have been effected ; but, with me, the malady has progressed too far. No, doctor, it is very kind in you to encourage me as long as there is hope ; but my hope in life is now almost extinct, and I beg you will not deceive either yourself or me. Everything around me being bright and lovely, might, in some frames of mind, induce me to cling to life ; but I am confident that those I love will not want for a sustaining and protecting guardian ; and I have such firm faith that I am passing to a still brighter and happier world, that every earthly wish is subdued."



"Your state, madam, is truly an enviable one," said the medical man; his emotion being too great to suffer him to say more.

"It has cost me much suffering to bring my mind to see my true state," continued Mrs. Montgomery; "to feel and know that the disease is daily progressing, and baffles all medical skill. It is right to hope, when reason sustains us in doing so; but it is folly to deceive ourselves."

Dr. Barton was very much gratified with the composure and correctness with which his patient looked forward to the result of her indisposition. Her views relative to her final recovery coincided with his own; still he ardently hoped to be instrumental in prolonging the life of one who was so eminently useful to her family and friends.

"Give me palliatives, Doctor," said the invalid, "and do not annoy me with too much medicine."

"That is my purpose in writing this prescription," replied the doctor. "You must sustain your strength as much as possible, by taking a drive every pleasant day. With care, I think you may recover from this attack, and perhaps for some time enjoy very tolerable health. I most earnestly hope that such will be the case."

"So do I, Doctor," rejoined Mrs. Montgomery, with an expression of countenance which seemed to say—"Doubtful."

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE NEW ENTERPRISE.

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“The study of literature nourishes youth, entertains old age, adorns prosperity, solaces adversity, is delightful at home, and unobtrusive abroad.”

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WHAT a delightful influence does a living, active, energetic hope impart to the sorrow-stricken heart. It seems to blot out from view the overshadowing present, and, by enabling the mind to look confidently to a more serene, calm, elevating future, gives it strength to cast off the morbid film in which it has been enshrouded, and again to assert its supremacy over matter.

Such is the condition in which we find Isabella Gray on the morning succeeding her visit to the Rectory. Deeply sensible that her future life must be one of action, with an energy based upon and inseparable from hope, she selected for her field of operation that pursuit which was most congenial to her taste; and, anticipating much pleasure in the commingling of active duties with intellectual enjoyment, she now longed for the arrival of the period which would mark the commencement of her labors.

Herein are exhibited some of the advantages afforded by a judicious intellectual culture—the importance of which cannot be estimated. How very low in the scale of comparison sinks the young lady, the sole object of whose education has been her accomplishment in the frivolities of youth! and how very unfit must not such a one be to encounter the ever-changing events of life!

“Isabella!” said Mrs. Gray, as she entered the parlor, on the morning above alluded to, and found her daughter occupied in examining her portefolio of music, the associations connected with which would have exercised a paralyzing influence on all her efforts, but for the bright star of hope which irradiated her mind; “I have been trying to think if there was any possible way by which we could keep a servant.”

Isabella, at once impressed with the idea, laid down the portefolio which she held in her hand, and seated herself upon an ottoman near her mother, for the purpose of more deliberately considering the subject.

“How do you think it can be accomplished?” she asked.

“There is one way in which it may be done, if no other should present,” said Mrs. Gray; “and that is, to part with some of our silver. I have been making an estimate of our expenses, as well as of our limited resources.”

“What is the result?”

“Another year will very nearly consume all of our ready money,” answered Mrs. Gray.

"I almost fear to part with any thing," said Isabella; "we cannot tell at present what our emergencies may be."

"Very true, my dear," continued her mother; "but we must not lose sight of the fact, that health is of paramount importance, as the loss of that would leave us nothing to depend upon. We cannot lessen our domestic expenses, in any way that I am aware of, nor can we remove from our present location until the lease expires; and it is doubtful whether we can even reduce our rent by a change, without occupying indifferent rooms in an unhealthy neighborhood."

"We will avoid that as long as we can," replied Isabella.

"That is what I wish to do," remarked Mrs. Gray. "To effect that object, we should be active and diligent, while we yet have something to rely upon; and, therefore, I am inclined to turn my attention to writing, by which I think we can meet the expense of a servant. Unaccustomed as we both are to very great physical exertion, I am confident that we shall experience the injurious effect of being without a domestic during the warm weather; and I would make any sacrifice rather than risk the loss of your strength, or my own. Should I fail, I can then part with a piece of silver; but in any case, I regard it as a laudable effort, and one worth making."

"Do you purpose engaging in the labor of copying?" asked Isabella.

"No; I design contributing to periodicals," replied Mrs. Gray.

"I am afraid, ma," said Isabella, "that you will find your nervous system unequal to the task."

"No, I think not," rejoined Mrs. Gray; "it will serve as an amusement—just what I need to absorb my attention. If I now had the manuscripts I destroyed, I have no doubt they could be made very useful to us in our present emergency."

"It would be pleasant for you to have some such congenial employment during the time I am engaged in giving lessons," remarked Isabella.

"Yes, very," said Mrs. Gray; "and I may succeed in making it profitable. That must be the basis of all our actions and efforts for the present."

"Well, ma," said Isabella, "I am favorably impressed with the idea. Suppose we go this morning to the intelligence office, and inquire for a servant?"

"That is what I was going to propose," said Mrs. Gray; "there is no reason for delay."

"None at all," said Isabella; "I will defer arranging this music until after our return."

"Very well," said Mrs. Gray, "we will soon set out; but listen, some one is ringing the door-bell."

"I'll open the door, mother," said Isabella, as she passed into the little entry for that purpose. It proved to be the postman; and she returned with a letter in her hand, the superscription of which she was reading very attentively. "Here is a letter," said she, "post-marked Cincinnati;" and, tearing off the envelope, she looked at the signature, exclaiming, as she did so, with evident pleasure, "Oh, it's from Mrs. King!"

"Ah, indeed," said Mrs. Gray, "how very kind she was during our stay with her previous to our coming here!"

"Yes," was Isabella's mechanical answer, reading the letter at the same time. "She desires us to come and spend the summer at her residence."

"Read it aloud, my dear," said Mrs. Gray.

Isabella read the letter through silently; then, handing it to her mother, she said, "Excuse me, ma, I cannot read it aloud," and burst into a flood of tears. Mrs. Gray knew too well the cause. It was the first letter received from their friend since the death of Henry. She, however, having had more time to nerve herself, not only read the letter composedly, but also talked calmly of their kind friend, as well as of the delicate and cordial sympathy expressed.

Isabella very soon brushed aside the unbidden tears, saying, as she did so, "It is kind in Mary to write to us so pleasantly, and to express a wish to have us with her."

"Yes, very," said Mrs. Gray; "would you like to go to her, my dear?"

"Do not ask me, ma; we must not talk of what we would desire."

"It would not cost us more to go to Cincinnati, and return in the autumn, than to remain here during the summer," urged Mrs. Gray.

"Perhaps not," said Isabella; "but I have a purpose to accomplish here, and I must not be foiled in my efforts by unnecessary loss of time."

"I think your views are correct, my dear," replied Mrs. Gray; "it is, no doubt, better that we should remain here; still, I am desirous of giving you every opportunity for enjoyment in my power."

"I should be delighted to enjoy Mary's society," said Isabella; "we have always been such intimate friends; but yet I cannot say that I really desire to return to Cincinnati at present. There are so many painful associations connected with it, that I could not enjoy my old home; and I fancy everything would appear to me to wear a different aspect."

"Most likely they would," said Mrs. Gray.

"I have, likewise, almost a horror of again meeting Mr. Brown," said Isabella.

"I do not think you need give yourself any uneasiness on that account," said Mrs. Gray, "for he certainly will not trouble you again, after such repeated refusals."

"Perhaps not," said Isabella; "but I would rather not give him an opportunity."

"I'm afraid you are a little vain of your charms," said Mrs. Gray, smiling.

"No," replied her daughter, "I do not think I overestimate my charms; nor do I deem him susceptible to the fascination of true feminine loveliness."

"Then how do you account for his pertinacity in pressing his suit? He certainly must have been aware that you were dowerless."

"Oh, no," replied Isabella; "he does not seek wealth; he has already enough of this world's goods;

but he is confident that, with his money, he can buy himself a good wife. At least, such is my opinion of the man."

"Very probably your estimate of Mr. Brown is correct; but you should guard against forming such an opinion of any man, without good reason."

"That is very true," rejoined Isabella; "but I happen to know that he is desirous of marrying a lady who can—as he himself expresses it—'do honor to my fortune, by dispensing the hospitalities of my mansion in a style becoming my station.' I do not censure the man for aiming to obtain just such a wife; but he is devoid of tact, or he would not make use of such language in presence of others. Besides, his physiognomy is my index to his character. He would need a very adroit partner to dispense his splendid hospitalities with sufficient economy to please him."

"Does he talk in the manner you represent?" asked Mrs. Gray.

"Yes, ma; I have heard him, though his remarks were not addressed directly to myself; and I am also aware that I have been recommended to him as being a lady who would fill up the measure of his requirements. I have but a very slight acquaintance with Mr. Brown, and I do not desire ever to be more intimate with him than I am at present. There is neither congeniality of taste nor of sentiment between us; and if he has any discernment he must be aware of it, which should be sufficient to deter any sensible man from pressing his suit. A review of all these facts will, I



think, bear me out in my estimate of Mr. Brown's character," said Isabella; "and," she continued, playfully, "as he wants to buy a wife who will stand in his affections second to his dinner and his horse, I do not choose to be the lady."

"You are quite right, my dear," said Mrs. Gray; "I am happy to hear you say so."

"Ah! my dear mother, you would be still more satisfied with my determination, could you but see his cold, self-confident manner. I have not common patience with the man," said Isabella, with an indignant expression; "I never wish to think of him again."

"Well, well," said her mother, laughing at her daughter's excitement, "we will let Mr. Brown rest, while we go and seek a servant."

Biddy Carrol, a young Irish girl, was engaged to officiate in the capacity of "maid of all work." She was satisfied to receive low wages, in consequence of her inexperience, and the comparatively small amount of duties to be performed. She proved very tractable, and in a short time became a very important appendage to the household, performing most of the manual labor, and thus enabling the ladies to have almost entire command of their time.

Mrs. Gray immediately began to try her skill at literary composition; or, rather, to revive a talent which had long given place to domestic cares and social enjoyments. She hoped to find a solace for her de-

pressed spirits in mental occupation, as well as to derive a pecuniary benefit from her labors.

About ten days after their visit to the Rectory, Mrs. Gray was in her own room occupied in writing, while Isabella, seated at the piano in the parlor, was playing a very pretty German air, when the door was opened, and Biddy announced company in rather an awkward manner. She had either failed to hear the names when given, or her memory had proved treacherous, for she said as she ushered in the visitors, "Here's company, Miss Gray." Isabella immediately rose from her piano, and shook hands with the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, who then introduced her to Mrs. Brewster. They were received by Isabella with her usual ease and grace. As soon as they were seated, she inquired concerning the health of Mrs. Montgomery.

"She is, I think, rather better than when you saw her the other morning, Miss Gray," replied the doctor. "She would have been much gratified to accompany Mrs. Brewster in her visit to you this morning, but the dampness prevented."

"It would have given me great pleasure to have seen her," said Isabella.

"I hope Mrs. Gray is quite well, this morning," said the doctor.

"Thank you, Dr. Montgomery, she is very well; but I think she is engaged at present—you will please excuse her."

"Certainly," replied Dr. Montgomery; "Mrs. Brewster has called more particularly to see you."

"Yes, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Brewster, "I have learned through my friend, Mrs. Montgomery, that you are desirous of giving instruction in music."

"I am anxious to do so, Mrs. Brewster," replied Isabella, "and would feel myself under many obligations for pupils."

"I have called for the purpose of soliciting you to teach my daughters."

"How many pupils would you have for me?" inquired Isabella.

"Three," replied Mrs. Brewster. "The youngest, nine years of age, has never taken lessons. Would you have any objection to a beginner?"

"Not the least," said Isabella.

"I think I understood that you had never given lessons," said Mrs. Brewster.

"Never," replied Isabella.

"I hope, Miss Gray, you will not find it more arduous than you anticipate," said Mrs. Brewster.

"I have not the least fear of it, madam. Having been very thoroughly instructed, I think I fully comprehend the duties which it will be necessarily incumbent upon me to perform; and I regard the occupation with agreeable anticipations."

"What are your terms, Miss Gray?" inquired Mrs. Brewster.

"From inquiries that I have made in New York, I have concluded to put my terms at one dollar per lesson," replied Isabella.

"Do you make no deduction for beginners?" asked Mrs. Brewster.

"I do not think it would be just to do so, madam. I believe it has been generally conceded," said Isabella, with a pleasant smile, "that correct primary instruction in music is of paramount importance. Such being my views, the more youthful will require an equal share of my time with the more advanced pupils."

"Your views are correct, Miss Gray; we shall have no difficulty about terms," said Mrs. Brewster, pleasantly.

"If my instruction does not warrant my terms, I shall be most happy to make a proper deduction," said Isabella.

"I decidedly prefer high prices to poor instruction," replied Mrs. Brewster.

"Certainly," said Dr. Montgomery, "it is much the cheapest in the end. It is a very important matter in any department of education, that the elementary principles should be correctly taught."

"Very," said Mrs. Brewster. "I suppose," she continued, "you will come to my house to give lessons, Miss Gray?"

"I should much prefer to do so, as I should benefit by exercise in the open air," replied Isabella.

"Could you commence to-morrow?" inquired Mrs. Brewster.

"At what hour?" asked Isabella.

"Any time after eleven o'clock," said Mrs. Brewster.

“Will it suit your arrangements if I come soon after eleven?” again inquired Isabella.

“Very well; that hour will suit me better than a later one,” said Mrs. Brewster; and, opening her card-case, she drew from it a handsome engraved card containing her address,—“Mrs. H. W. Brewster, 35th street No. —, New York,”—and handed it to Miss Gray, informing her at the same time, that the Fulton-Ferry stage would convey her to a point within a few doors of her residence.

“Thank you,” said Isabella, as she received the card.

After a short conversation on general topics, Mrs. Brewster and Dr. Montgomery departed for their respective homes, and Isabella was left to reflect upon the rapidity with which events seemed crowding upon each other. She immediately sought her mother’s room, which she entered with an expression of anxiety, mingled with delight.

“Pardon me, mother,” said she, “for interrupting you; but I must inform you of my good fortune. I have obtained three music scholars.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mrs. Gray, laying down her pen.

“Yes, ma; I have so.” And Isabella then related to her mother the incidents of the visit, with which the reader is already acquainted.

## CHAPTER X.

## COMMENCEMENT OF DUTIES.

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In what various forms  
Dost Thou descend, oh, Holy Comforter,  
To cheer Thy trusting child !  
Sometimes I see Thee in bright hopes  
Of future ease, to solace, and sustain us  
'Till we reach that better land.  
But now ;—I feel Thy soothing influence  
In pleasing memories of the past.  
Oh ! blessed Comforter !  
What heart can droop and mourn,  
When Thou art near ?

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At the time appointed, Isabella Gray ascended the steps of a large three-story freestone building in Thirty-fifth street, and rang the bell for admittance. The door-plate exhibited the name of "H. W. Brewster." The house was constructed in the modern style of architecture, but not unlike many still remaining in the same locality.

"The situation is airy, and altogether desirable," thought Miss Gray, as she gazed around her while waiting for a servant to open the door.

Her summons was answered by a fine-looking colored waiter, whose cleanly appearance, snow-white apron, and

polite demeanor, instantly impressed her with a favorable opinion of the interior arrangements.

"Is Mrs. Brewster at home?" she inquired.

"Yes, ma'am," promptly replied the waiter, at the same time making a low bow. "Please to walk in."

Isabella was ushered into the unoccupied parlor, where she seated herself, after handing her card to the waiter.

Mrs. Brewster and her three daughters did not long delay their appearance, yet sufficient time elapsed to enable Isabella to take a hasty survey of the suite of rooms she was then in—three in number. They were all arrayed in summer garniture; that is, the carpets had been substituted by India matting; the chairs, sofas, ottomans, etc., were covered with neat chintz, for the purpose of protecting them from dust; and the mirror as well as picture frames were also covered with light material. But that which most attracted her attention was the grand piano, occupying one corner of the front parlor. The adjoining room was furnished with luxurious chairs, lounges and divans, similar to those in the first, interspersed with several pieces of furniture of modern invention. The third apartment she conjectured was the library, from the imperfect view she could obtain of it.

"Good morning, Miss Gray," said Mrs. Brewster, who entered the parlor while Isabella was engaged in examining a piece of music which lay upon the piano.

"Good morning, Mrs. Brewster," returned Isabella.

"I have brought you down my trio," said Mrs.

Brewster, playfully. "Here is Mary, my eldest; this is Belle; and the last we call Clara."

"Good morning, young ladies," said their future teacher, as she shook hands with each, at the same time mentally criticising their different characters.

Mary was a beautiful girl, both in features and in person; her light hair and complexion were admirably in keeping with her soft blue eyes, and her manners were more mature than those of most young ladies at the age of fourteen. Hers was a placid, pleasant face to look upon, yet it did not indicate great strength of mind, or depth of feeling.

Belle was eleven years of age, as Isabella had been previously informed by the mother. She was a clear brunette, had dark brown hair, and soft, hazel eyes, which, though not large, were remarkably expressive. Her features were not particularly attractive, but the smile which illumined them, and the sweet glance of her eyes, bespoke deep feeling. Her heart was evidently disproportioned to her body, for she had a small, thin, nervous, sharply angular frame.

Clara, as the reader has been already informed, was nine years of age, and a perfect little beauty; more like Mary, in features and personal appearance, than her sister Belle, and yet unlike her—possessing equal beauty, but more animation. Still she failed to enlist the sympathies like Belle.

Such, at a mere casual glance, was the opinion formed by Isabella of the three children. The favorable impression they made infused into her heart



renewed courage to commence the task of giving her first music lesson. For that purpose, and in order to avoid interruptions, she was shown into the library, which proved to be the rear room, as Isabella had surmised. There she found a very good square piano.

The lessons progressed, and were completed to Isabella's satisfaction. It happened that Belle's lesson was last; the reason of which was, that the child had chosen to have it so, and managed to effect her purpose. As soon, however, as her task was finished, she sprang from the piano-stool with the agility of a fawn, and throwing her arms around her teacher, said,

"Miss Gray, shall I tell you why I wished to take my lesson last?"

"Do, if you please," said Isabella.

"I wanted you," said the child, "to play an accompaniment for me while I sang a favorite piece, and I was afraid you would say you had not time, if my lesson was not the last."

Isabella kissed the little fairy, and told her to bring her song, that she would be happy to play the accompaniment for her. She expected to see some negro melody, or at least a simple air; but what was her surprise when Belle placed on the piano before her a song from "*Lucia Di Lammermoor—Spargi d' amaro—I'll pray for thee.*"

"Do you sing this in Italian?" asked Isabella.

"Yes, Miss Gray," answered the child.

The song was executed in a style that would have been creditable to a person of more mature years.

Isabella was so fascinated with the voice, the style of singing, and the naive simplicity of the child, that she was on the point of clasping her in her arms, and telling her how much she admired her; but she was prevented from giving way to her feelings by the fear of arousing the vanity of her pupil.

"Have you taken lessons in vocal music?" asked Isabella, as she turned from the piano, though still retaining her seat, and drew the child nearer, by placing one arm around her waist.

"Only a little while," she answered.

"Are you fond of singing?" inquired her teacher.

"Yes, indeed; I would rather sing than play."

"I am sorry to hear you make that acknowledgment," said Isabella.

"I like to play, too," said the child; and, looking up into her teacher's face, with an expression of intense feeling, she continued, "But I do love to sing."

At that moment Mrs. Brewster entered the room, saying, as she did so, "I heard Belle's voice, and, therefore, inferred that the lessons were ended." Drawing a quartette table toward Isabella, she seated herself opposite, when the waiter, who had followed his mistress, placed upon it a tray with refreshments.

"You must take a lunch before you return home," said Mrs. Brewster.

"It is quite unnecessary," said Isabella, "but I will not refuse your kindness."

"Belle, my dear," said Mrs. Brewster, "the children want you up stairs. Bid Miss Gray good-morning,

and we will excuse you." The child obeyed her mother's command; but she would have much preferred remaining where she could look at Miss Gray's beautiful face, hear her talk, and watch her smile, which she thought the most lovely she had ever seen. As she walked slowly and thoughtfully up stairs (for children's reveries are sometimes deep,) she breathed a sigh, and wished, oh! how sincerely, that she were as beautiful.

"Mrs. Brewster," said Isabella, "your daughter has an uncommonly fine voice."

"Yes, she has a fine voice," replied that lady, "and she uses it so much that I fear she will injure it. I was averse to her taking singing lessons at such an early age; but her desire was so ardent, that we thought it best for her to receive some instruction, hoping that the discipline of artistic practice might have a tendency to lessen her inclination in that direction. She is not strong, and I fear she sings too much; but it has become such a passion with her, that we think it better to divert her mind from it, than to oppose her directly. I think I have found another scholar for you, Miss Gray; that is, if you desire to have more."

"I would be very happy, indeed, to increase the number," replied Isabella, "I would like to procure as many as will reasonably occupy my time."

"I met Mrs. Lincoln last evening," continued Mrs. Brewster, "and she wishes to secure a teacher for her only daughter, who is about the age of my daughter

Mary. I mentioned your name to her, and I think she will call upon you very soon."

"I feel greatly indebted to you for your kindness, Mrs. Brewster. If you will give me her address, I will visit her before returning to Brooklyn."

"It is No. —, Fifth Avenue," said Mrs. Brewster.

"Is she an acquaintance of yours, Mrs. Brewster?" asked Isabella.

"Yes;" replied Mrs. Brewster, "I cannot say that we are particularly acquainted, although we very frequently meet in company. They are highly respectable people, and very wealthy."

By this time Isabella had finished her lunch, and after thanking Mrs. Brewster for her hospitality, she departed, with the intention of calling upon Mrs. Lincoln.

On entering the residence of the last-named lady, Isabella was unfavorably impressed with its showy, costly appearance; even the furniture of the small reception room bore the mark of extravagance, though lacking a homelike aspect. It would have required but a slight stretch of imagination for her to have fancied the house to be put in order for exhibition, instead of occupancy.

Mrs. Lincoln soon made her appearance. She was dressed for dinner, in the height of the fashion, and assumed an air of great dignity, which her tall, stately figure aided her in sustaining. She finally managed

to seat herself, when Isabella explained the object of her visit.

"Oh yes," said the lady, in a rather languishing tone of voice, "I told Mrs. Brewster I was going to see you; but I am very glad you have saved me the trouble. What do you charge for music lessons, Miss Gray?"

Isabella's vein of humor inclined her to answer, that she charged an extra price for teaching vulgar people; but, controlling herself, she replied respectfully, that her terms were "one dollar per lesson."

"One dollar a lesson!" exclaimed the dignified lady. "You don't say! Why that's very dear for female teachers, Miss Gray. Does Mrs. Brewster give you that?"

"She does, madam," answered Isabella.

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Lincoln; "then I s'pose you're an uncommon good teacher."

"That remains to be proved," said Isabella, "for I ——"

"Where have you given lessons in the city?" asked Mrs. Lincoln, interrupting Isabella.

"I have never given music lessons in my life, Mrs. Lincoln," replied Isabella; "but I think ——"

"Why, do tell!" exclaimed the aristocratic lady; "never given lessons before, and now ask a dollar a lesson? Does Mrs. Brewster know that you never gave lessons before?"

"She does, madam;" was the reply, "I do not wish to deceive either yourself or her."

"Well," said Mrs. Lincoln, in an under tone, "she's a good judge of music teaching, and ought to know."

"Has your daughter taken lessons in music?" inquired Isabella.

"Oh, yes," answered Mrs. Lincoln, "ever so long."

"Of whom?"

"Of Mr.——, Mr.——, it's one of those hard German names I can't never remember," replied Mrs. Lincoln.

"Then she took lessons from a master?" said Miss Gray.

"Yes," replied the lady, "and he was the most beautifulest player, Miss Gray, you ever heard. We shouldn't have given him up, but he took a notion to go to California. And it does seem as though all the best people went to California."

"Ah," said Isabella, "perhaps they do:" and thoughts of one who would, in her estimation, come under that class, who had gone to that land of struggle and hardship, crossed her mind, leaving their indelible impress, as thoughts of loved objects invariably do. "What were his terms?" she inquired.

"Oh, we gave him a good deal more than what you ask," replied Mrs. Lincoln; "I don't know exactly what it was, but it was something like two dollars a lesson. But we won't have any trouble about the price, Miss Gray, for it isn't as though I was poor; and, besides, I've taken a liking to you already, and I think you and Ernestine will get on nicely."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lincoln," said Isabella. "When do you wish your daughter to commence her lessons?"

"I think she had better begin soon," replied Mrs. Lincoln. "I suppose you've begun with Mrs. Brewster's children?"

"Yes, madam, I have," answered Isabella; "and I will come to you to-morrow, if you desire me."

"Very well," said Mrs. Lincoln; "to-morrow morning, then."

As Isabella was leaving the room, she met Miss Ernestine Lincoln coming in from a walk, and was introduced to her by the young lady's mother. She was a healthy, fine-looking girl; indeed, she was quite handsome, and possessed very agreeable manners.

Soon after Isabella reached the street, she entered a Fulton-Ferry omnibus. There being no other occupant, she took a seat in the end farthest from the door. Knowing that she had a long distance to ride before reaching the ferry, and that she would probably be uninterrupted, she indulged in a revery. The busy, excited throng through which the coach was then wending its way, would, had she been in a different mood, have given variety and diversion to her thoughts; but in her present state of abstractedness, surrounding objects were unheeded. The world, to her, had assumed a new aspect, and the reflections which crowded upon her took possession of her mind. "Not quite one year," thought she, "has elapsed since I was luxuriating in the sunshine of fortune's smiles, and now—a stranger, in a strange city, I am seeking the means of

support. How little do the people who are getting in and out of this stage, and casting a glance at my veiled face, as well as at my mourning-dress, know of the troubles which it often requires a great effort to conceal!

“How oppressive is this stifling city atmosphere! With what delight could I now take one of those refreshing walks in the garden, or those woodland rambles, which I have all my life long enjoyed! and how blissful were the hours spent in the society of him whom my soul refuses to forget! I know 'tis folly to cherish the memory of the past; yet, somehow—I know not why—bygone recollections cast around my uncongenial duties a halo of peace, which soothes and cheers me on. Yes, my thoughts are ever with past days and the object of my love. How unwise, but yet how soothing! Even the rich, proud woman was unconsciously led to name the land of his adoption, which brought him to my mind, thus imparting a soothing influence to my almost drooping spirits. But I must not indulge in thoughts like these; it will not do. They are, doubtless, mere fancies of the brain; but still, I cannot forget.

“I must have done with these idle spirit-wanderings, and fix my thoughts and love upon my last surviving parent. For her in future I will live and toil, and pass through life a stoic to all else. My sometimes cheerless pathway shall be irradiated by the light of other and happier days; and I will be sustained by the belief that the spirits of the dear departed are lingering around me.”



"Fulton-Ferry, madam," called out the driver.

Isabella rallied from her revery, only to find that the passengers had all left the stage. However, being in good time for the boat, she was soon seated beside her mother in their peaceful little parlor, cheerfully relating the incidents of the day, and detailing her success in obtaining another pupil.

## CHAPTER XI.

## FORMIDABLE OBSTACLES.

---

Go fetch the doctor, without delay,  
Let him not mind about his pay,  
My coffers are full and well stored.  
Look, slave! and see, my life blood's ebbing fast,  
Another sun may be my last.

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Two months subsequent to the date on which Mr. Brown wrote the letter to Mr. Williams, previously given, his serving-man, John, was sent in great haste for a physician. His master was ill—how ill, he could not tell; but to all who anxiously inquired after the health of his very handsome, very wealthy, and much admired master, he stated that the gentleman had a very bad cold, and that upon his cambric handkerchief were to be seen streaks resembling the color of blood.

The medical man promptly obeyed the summons, for who could refuse to give their best services to the sole proprietor of such an estate? The hope of magnificent perquisites, in case the attack should prove to be severe, was a great incentive to activity in the dashing young doctor, and caused him, in his great haste to adminis-

ter relief to his patient, to pass unrecognized several of his personal friends.

"Ah, Doctor, I am glad to see you," said the patient, as the doctor entered Mr. Brown's room, where he found him, in dressing-gown and slippers, reclining upon a sofa; "I hope I have not alarmed you."

"Not in the least," replied the physician. "Gentlemen of our profession, you know, Mr. Brown, are accustomed to sudden calls; and you must be aware that a summons from you would, at any time, meet with a ready response."

The patient's case was very scientifically examined, according to the allopathic practice of medicine, and commented upon at the different stages of investigation. "The tongue looks clean," said the doctor; "pulse not much excited. Your skin feels rather moist. Have you any pain in the head or back?" he inquired.

"No; but here," said the patient, placing upon his chest a soft white hand, the little finger of which was encircled by a diamond ring of exquisite workmanship.

"Pain there?" asked the physician.

"No; I cannot really say that I have a pain there; but, you see this?" continued the patient, showing a cambric handkerchief streaked with the fluid before described.

The doctor, having looked carefully and critically at it, then said:

"You seem to have a severe cold; have you not?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Brown; "I have suffered with a cold for several days; but, this morning, for the first time, I have had symptoms of hemorrhage."

"Is your throat sore?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes; very sore indeed," answered the patient.

"Do you feel any soreness down here?" asked the physician, placing his hand upon his patient's chest.

"Not any," replied Mr. Brown.

"I would like to look at your throat, if you please," said the doctor.

"Certainly, Doctor," said the patient; "do that which is necessary for the restoration of my health. Don't spare any thing, either in money or time."

"You need not have given me that admonition, Mr. Brown," replied the physician, "for I am fully impressed with the responsibility of my position." Thus assuring his patient that there was at least one honest man in the profession, the doctor took a silver teaspoon from a cup standing on the table near by. With the handle he gently pressed down the sick man's tongue, and examined his throat, which he found to be highly inflamed.

"I think you need give yourself no uneasiness about this slight hemorrhage," said the doctor, as he seated himself; "it has undoubtedly come from the throat, which is considerably inflamed."

"Do you think so, Doctor?"

"I do, most certainly; indeed, I am confident of it," replied the doctor.

"I am very much gratified to hear you say so, Doc-

tor," said the invalid, rising from his reclining posture, and looking very much as though he had sanguine hopes of being again fully restored to health. "I have no fancy for lung diseases."

"I cannot discover that your lungs are in the least affected," said the physician; "this slight sympathetic cough, which I see troubles you, arises from the inflammation in the throat." The medical man then ordered a simple regimen, with some other trifling prescriptions, and enjoined particular caution against the injurious effects of the night air.

"I am desirous," said Mr. Brown, "of visiting New York during the holidays, which are now near at hand."

"Why do you go in that direction?" asked the doctor; "why not go South during this cold weather?"

"Would you recommend a milder climate?" inquired the invalid.

"I would, most assuredly," replied the physician. "It would be safer, so far as your health is concerned. Not that I deem it necessary for you to make such a change; but there is nothing to prevent you from passing the winter in a climate more congenial to your tastes; and it appears to me that, so far as pleasure may be a consideration, the South has the precedence. It certainly would have with me."

"I don't know but you are right, Doctor," said Mr. Brown; "but where would you go?"

"Go! Why I would go where I could find the most enjoyment.—To the West Indies.—To New Orleans.—

Take up your quarters at the St. Charles, and enjoy the society of northern ladies in a southern climate.— Fall in love with some beauty, a fair match for yourself, (you know money is no consideration with you); and return home in the spring with the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Brown.”

“I think I have such a lady already in view,” said Mr. Brown.

“Ah! indeed; so much the better. But why not have the knot tied, and take her along?”

“Don’t understand me, Doctor, that I have entered into any matrimonial engagement. I only desire to say that I know a lady answering your description. It may, however, be nothing more than an image which my fancy has pictured.”

“That’s a preliminary step,” said the doctor; “press on, my friend, you’ll gain the prize.”

“That is my intention,” replied the invalid. “But I must think seriously of this southern trip. I am inclined to give the preference to New Orleans.”

Of course the doctor would not differ from his patient, but readily coincided in his plan, saying, “I think, Mr. Brown, you are correct in your choice; it is undoubtedly the most desirable place, and it has one great advantage over the Islands; you avoid a voyage that is always disagreeable; and which, as I have assured you that your health does not require a sea voyage, would only be a bore.”

The medical man left his patient in good spirits, and gratified that he was not more of an invalid; still he

felt a little annoyed that his anticipations of an opportunity to exhibit his profound skill, and to obtain its attendant reward in reputation, as well as pecuniarily, should so suddenly evaporate.

The author does not wish the reader to consider the sketch of this scene as an attempt to undervalue a proper regard for health, or to employ the weapon of ridicule against those who may be unnecessarily alarmed about their physical condition; but in the instance just related, as in too many of a similar character, the cause of uneasiness evidently had its origin in an over-regard for self, and in a lack of healthful occupation, both mental and physical—a condition which can rarely be produced in a person endowed with an active mind, and who does not permit his reasoning faculties to become enervated for want of use.

Mr. Brown, again re-assured, experienced a sensation of pleasure in the confident hope of enjoying a long and brilliant life. The suggestive hints just received had greatly encouraged him in his previously-formed purpose of yielding himself still more to the intoxication of worldly pleasures. It had latterly been his intention to proceed direct to New York, immediately after obtaining an answer to his California letter, and to lose no time in obtaining an interview with Miss Gray, for the purpose of maturing a matrimonial engagement, which would effectually conceal his diabolical acts of deception and fraud. But his purpose was now changed. “Why so much haste?” thought he. “I can pass a pleasant winter in New Orleans,

with but little more expense than if I were to remain here, where everybody has made my acquaintance who wants a good dinner. My bill for wine used by company alone is becoming enormous; yet I can see no way to reduce it, and, at the same time, maintain my present standing, but by temporary absence. In New Orleans, however, I am a stranger; and I'll make no acquaintances there, rather than pour my money down the throats of people who think I have no better use for it. I'll show them how I can use money when I fit up my establishment; it shall exceed in magnificence anything to be found in this city. What a change it will be for my wife. Ha! ha! wife! that's a familiar name. It is the first time I ever in reality thought of the beautiful Miss Gray in so intimate a connection. But what a change it will be to her, from present penury to such affluence! Yes, indeed; but there is one difficulty I had not thought of. I suppose the mother will desire to live with her only daughter; but that must not be; I cannot allow it under any circumstances." Indulging such thoughts, the rich man found himself so rapidly convalescing, that he paced the room for some time in considerable excitement.

"But," continuing his train of reflection, "I'll say nothing about that until we are married, and then I will recommend her to live with her son. [The reader will understand that the event here detailed, occurred during the winter preceding Henry Gray's death.] If that does not answer, I'll furnish her with sufficient money to convey her to England, where she



has, or ought to have, friends. But, whether she has or has not, she can never reside with me; I will not tolerate the dictation of a mother-in-law in my house.

“I am not quite positive which is the better course, to proceed to New York first, or to return home by way of that city. If I could but obtain an answer from California, to assure me that my letter was received, I could better decide on my course; as I should not much fancy an interview with Mr. Williams in this part of the country, just at this time. I must have patience, however; and, meantime, I will reflect upon the propriety of journeying either north or south.”

Such was the result of Mr. Brown's meditations during the interval which elapsed between the visit of his physician, and the important duty of dressing for dinner; a duty incumbent on all who have a feeling of self-respect—but which the gentleman of leisure above named ever performed with the most artistic care.

Passing over another month, brings us into the season of frost and snow, the middle of January; about which time Mr. Brown discovered, one morning, while looking over the “News,” that the California steamer had arrived at New York two days previously, thus giving ample time for the transportation of the mail to Cincinnati. Shortly after his serving-man John returned from the post-office with three letters—which was certainly a large number, considering they were addressed to a gentleman whose correspondence was necessarily limited by a lack of congenial associations. A hasty glance revealed the long-expected

post mark, "San Francisco, Cal.," and the letter read as follows :

"SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,

December 5th, 18—.

"ALEXANDER BROWN, ESQ.;

"DEAR SIR:—Yours bearing date October 20th, came to hand by due course of mail. I am not at present making investments in real estate, but confining my business strictly to my profession.

"You will readily see the necessity of transacting your business through some other medium.

"Respectfully yours,

"ROBERT WILLIAMS."

"Short, if not sweet," thought Mr. Brown, as he laid Mr. Williams' letter on the table, and took up one of the others, at the same time whistling *Nelly Bley*; "rather a cold response to his ardent hopes and his devoted love-letter. Yes; he is a little piqued, I see, or he would have congratulated me. But it's just as well that he should be, as he will be the more likely to keep out of the way."

The arrival of this letter dissipated all pre-existing doubts which had contended for the mastery in Mr. Brown's mind, and he at once decided upon his future course: considering it certain that there was now no obstacle existing to prevent him from delaying his

visit to the north, he felt himself free to follow the bent of his inclinations, and to act upon the advice of his physician. Accordingly all the arrangements necessary for his journey to New Orleans, accompanied by his faithful attendant, John, were speedily made, and the travellers in due time reached their destination, without meeting with any extraordinary incidents *en route*.

Arrived at the Crescent City desirable apartments were obtained in the "St. Charles Hotel." Mr. Brown, who had been for some time slightly annoyed by the monitions of an uneasy conscience, found that change of scene, (the fruitful alleviator of most troubles), had so lent its influence to quiet the secret little throbs, that in a short time memory refused to perform its allotted task, and no emotion was produced by unbidden thoughts of a disagreeable past.

The comparatively mild southern winter had by this time merged into balmy spring. Invalids from the north, accompanied by more robust friends, had sought change of scene, and an avoidance of the chilling easterly winds of early spring, by a sojourn in a more congenial climate. The "St. Charles" was, in consequence, densely crowded. All was animation, variety, attraction, and Mr. Brown moved amid the assembled guests, evidently fancying himself a star of the first magnitude, around which revolved the lesser luminaries, on whom he had the happiness of shedding the radiating splendor of his own superior orb.

Surrounded by beauty and fashion, he felt that he

was in his proper element, with a fair prospect of being fully appreciated. His great personal attractions, in connection with his reputation for vast and increasing wealth, did not fail, among one class, to procure him the most devoted admirers. His influence, however, upon another circle, although perhaps smaller than the former, might be likened in its effects to contact with a would-be-great man—the tendency to depreciation in esteem keeping even pace with the progress toward intimacy.

He saw beautiful ladies whom he admired, and at times he felt half inclined to award them a preference to his “dark eyed” beauty; but two objections were presented to such a change of purpose. Did he fail to marry Miss Gray, an investigation of the reasons why, might ensue, which would, in all probability lead to a disclosure of his complicity in purloining Mr. Williams’s letter from the post-office, and his guilty conscience suggested what would be the resultant consequences. He either overlooked, or was disinclined to avail himself of the advantages, which a handsome bribe to the post-office clerk from whom he received the letter might have given him, (though such an offer might have been rejected; for there are not many persons employed in such a capacity who are susceptible to sordid influences); at all events, he took no such steps to conceal his crime.

Another very weighty reason why he gave Isabella the preference was, that she had no wealthy parents who could feel themselves at liberty to assume a some-

what dictatorial tone in regard to their dear daughter's affairs ; and, as he did not wish to resign the direction of his own household, he concluded that Miss Gray's pecuniary circumstances would not only obviate all such inconveniences, but render her more submissive to his will.

With such views, Mr. Brown remained unmoved amid the fascinations by which he was surrounded ; but he participated heartily in the gay frivolities of the social multitude, and the period of his stay in the balmy south sped by on pleasure's wings so imperceptibly, that, like a beautiful passing thought, it left the mind peaceful and satisfied.

The first of May at length arrived, which period he had appointed for his return north. All the arrangements necessary for his departure the following week by the steamer to New York had been made, except the purchase of tickets and the selection of berths, which he contemplated to make the business of the morrow, when he was confounded and surprised by the receipt of a letter from his attorney at Cincinnati, requesting his immediate return. He stated that a suit which had been long pending in relation to the title of some property, was about to be decided, and, as Mr. Brown's interest in it was an exceedingly heavy one, he regarded it as of the utmost importance that he should be present personally. "I hope," continued the writer—"that I shall not be disappointed in seeing you without delay, it being of the utmost importance to success in my suit, that we have a personal inter-

view ; which will be impossible unless you come to me, for at present I am unable to leave home."

Mr. Brown was not long in deciding that inclination must yield to duty ; and, on the following morning, instead of directing his steps toward the steamboat ticket-office, to procure a passage by the next weekly steamer to New York, he took an unceremonious leave of his numerous agreeable acquaintances, and embarked on one of the fine steamers navigating the turbid waters of the Mississippi river.

After the lapse of a few weeks spent at home, finding that his interest in the property before mentioned was secure, he again began to think of his New York trip with increased interest ; and, it may be added, with increased confidence of his ultimate success in gaining the prize he sought. He had heard of the death of Miss Gray's brother ; and he foresaw that this loss must necessarily render her condition in life not only dependant, but comparatively unprotected.

The day previous to the one on which he had determined to set out for New York, an obstacle to his departure was presented, more formidable than anything he had hitherto encountered. During the morning of that day he felt a langour pervade his whole frame, accompanied with loss of appetite. Chills coursed through his frame with the rapidity of lightning, shooting their clammy tremors to the extremities of every limb ; his head was seething hot, and he became partially delirious ; in fact, he was seized with a severe attack of fever, which so thoroughly pros-

trated him that for many days he was in a perilous condition.

Ten days did his fever rage without the slightest mitigation, and so alarming were its ravages, that reason was completely dethroned, and his recovery regarded as almost hopeless by his physician, who rarely left his bedside. John, also, most admirably exhibited his fidelity to his master, by constant watchfulness.—On the tenth day a change took place, the fever subsided, and the sick man lay for days as helpless as an infant, which condition was more alarming to John than the former stage of the disease. But the observant eye of his physician discovered cause to hope for his gradual recovery. The disease had yielded to the treatment—the invalid's reasoning faculties were again restored; and, as the physician carefully observed his patient, he saw, day by day, and each succeeding hour, increasing symptoms of returning health.

After Mr. Brown had become so far convalescent as to be able to recline upon his sofa, and to obtain short intervals of respite from his wearisome bed, he one day thus addressed his servant, who at the time was dressing his master's hair :

“ Well, John ! I have had a hard time of it.”

“ Yes, massa—very.”

“ Did you think I wouldn't get well, John ?”

“ To tell the truth, Mr. Brown, I was terribly frightened after you stopped being so crazy.”

“ Why were you more frightened then, John ?”

“ Oh, massa ! you don't know how bad you looked,—

you was just as weak as a little baby. But when you was so crazy like, and talked so much, you didn't look so very sick."

"What did I talk about, John?"

"You talked about almost everything; but you talked the most about a letter."

"A letter! did I say what letter?"

"No, massa. The doctor asked you one day whose letter it was that troubled you so?"

"Did I tell him? did I tell anybody whose letter it was?"

"No, massa! I shouldn't never thought anything about your crazy talk; but the doctor said the letter troubled you so much, that I had better talk with you, and maybe you would tell me about it, and feel better. But I wasn't going to ask massa to tell me anything about his talk, that he didn't know nothing about hisself."

"You are a good boy, John; having been such a good nurse to me, you shall be well paid for it when I get well; but you must never tell any thing of what I said when I was so deranged,—you are aware that I did not know what I said."

"Oh no, massa; I never shall. Nor I don't care about pay, if you only get well."

"Did the doctor ask me many questions about the letter?"

"No, Mr. Brown, not hisself; but he wanted me to; but I didn't."

"That's right, John. Never trouble a sick person



by asking questions ; especially if they are deranged and don't know what they are talking about."

The invalid was not so well for a few days following the conversation with John. It proved to be only a temporary relapse ; yet it was sufficient to convince him that there were glimmerings of conscience still in his breast.

Mr. Brown's extreme suffering did not seem to have softened his heart ; but, on the contrary, he manifested vexation and annoyance at his long delay, and worryment at sight of his pale, emaciated face. More particularly did he regret the delay, for he feared that it would lead to an exposition of his past misdeeds.

"I must go farther north," thought he, as he stood one morning gazing at his pallid countenance in a mirror ; "I'll go to Saratoga, and remain there until cool weather. By that time, I shall be myself again."

The physician having been consulted, and his consent obtained, Mr. Brown was as speedily located in the "United States Hotel," at Saratoga, as the power of steam could conveniently transport him thither.

## CHAPTER XII.

## A CONVERSATION ON CARD PLAYING.

---

“Blest be the spot, where cheerful guests retire,  
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire!”

---

*Oliver Goldsmith.*

ISABELLA returned home, one excessively warm morning, very well satisfied with the music lessons just disposed of, but somewhat out of humor with the confinement of the heated city. She longed for green fields and pure country air, with an ardor which those alone can estimate who have been, for the first time in their lives, deprived of their invigorating influence. Although her health was apparently unimpaired, yet she frequently suffered from a languid nervous debility, to which she had been hitherto unaccustomed, and which tended at times to enervate both body and mind. Some days she suffered more than others, and on this one she felt the depressing influence in an unwonted degree.

After Biddy had responded to her ring, and opened the street door, Isabella inquired if Mrs. Gray was still in her own room. Obtaining an affirmative answer, she desired the girl to bring her a glass of ice-water.

She felt anxious lest such close confinement should exercise an injurious effect upon her mother's health, and before she could refresh herself with a cooling draught, and by a brief rest, her fancy depicted her mother as already looking ill. The forebodings of future trouble gathered and increased like clouds preceding a violent storm; and her anxiety became so great that, arising from the couch on which she had vainly courted repose, she sought her mother's apartment.

"Have you come, my dear?" said Mrs. Gray, without lifting her eyes from her paper, as she sat at the table writing with great rapidity.

"Yes, mother," replied Isabella, as she seated herself in a very comfortable old chair, which was placed on the opposite side of the table from where her mother sat,—a place she was accustomed to occupy when in her mother's apartment. "Have you been writing in this manner all the morning?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Gray, still continuing to write.

"Do, I beg of you, rest a little while, my dear mother," said Isabella; "for my sake, if not for your own."

"In one moment, my dear," replied Mrs. Gray; "I am just finishing my task."

Something like ten minutes elapsed, (during which time the silence was unbroken, save by the noise of the pen moving swiftly over the paper,) when Mrs. Gray, laying her pen upon the table, and, leaning

back in her chair with a smile, and an expression of satisfaction upon her countenance, said :

“ There ; it is done.”

“ What is done ? What have you been writing ?” asked her daughter.

“ I have, as a little relaxation from my usual labors, spent the morning in jotting down my views in regard to card-playing.”

“ I know just what they are, ma,” said Isabella ; “ or rather, I should say that I know the principles on which your views are based ; but I would be very much pleased to read what you have written. May I ?” she continued, holding out her hand for the manuscript.

“ Well, I don’t know,” said the mother, taking it up and looking at it. “ You have quite deranged my plans.”

“ How so ?” asked her daughter.

“ I intended you should see it first in print.”

“ Never mind, now ; I cannot wait for that,” replied Isabella, still holding out her hand, and with a beseeching look soliciting the privilege of perusing the manuscript.

“ Well, my dear,” said Mrs. Gray, “ you may read it, upon these conditions.”

“ Name them,” said the anxious petitioner.

“ Oh, Isabella ! you are too ridiculous,” said her mother, laughing. “ One would think, from your eagerness, that you anticipated a sight of some great production.”

“ So I do,” said Isabella. “ Do not, I beseech you,

keep me in this state of torture ; I cannot endure it. Come, let me have it, please," still extending her hand.

"Well," said Mrs. Gray ; "if you will sit there, before me, you may read it aloud, if you will promise not to make any criticisms until you have finished."

"I promise," said Isabella, at the same time taking the manuscript and reading aloud as follows, while Mrs. Gray reclined in her chair, and listened attentively :

"A CONVERSATION ON CARD-PLAYING.

"Ah! how do you do, Mrs. Grimes?" said Mrs. Sensible, as Mrs. Grimes and her son, a young man about seventeen, were ushered into Mrs. Sensible's drawing-room, one cold winter evening, after the shutters had been closed, the curtains dropped, the gas lighted, and the grate replenished with a good supply of coals. "I am most happy to see you," she continued. "Now you have come to pass that long-promised sociable evening with us."

Mrs. Grimes was upon the point of answering in the affirmative, when, observing in one part of the room a table covered with cards and counters, apparently in readiness for use, her purpose was suddenly changed.

"I am much obliged to you, Mrs. Sensible ; but it will not be possible for me to remain this evening ; I have only time for a short call."

"Oh, but I insist upon it," said Mr. Sensible, in his usual cordial manner.

"Yes," added his wife, "You must lay aside your cloak, for we have just got settled for a long, pleasant winter evening; and it is our delight to enjoy the society of our friends during the evening."

Mrs. Grimes was so much charmed with the cheerful appearance of all around her, but more particularly with the cordial, warm-hearted hospitality of her friends, that her resolution failed, notwithstanding the dread she had ever entertained of exposing her son to the temptations of a card-table; and feeling confident that they would not think of playing, on finding it was not agreeable to their guests, her cloak, bonnet, and furs were promptly laid aside. The conversation of Mrs. Sensible's large family circle and their friends, soon became as cheerful as the aspect of the illuminated drawing-room.

"I believe," said Mr. Sensible, after having spent some time in very agreeable conversation with his wife and Mrs. Grimes, while the young people were entertaining themselves in their own way, "I have never had the pleasure of a rubber with you, Mrs. Grimes. We will have one now, if you have no objections."

"If you mean a game of cards, Mr. Sensible, you must excuse my ignorance."

"Certainly you can play a rubber of whist?"

"I never play cards," was the dignified answer.

"Ah! I'm sorry for that. I wish you had induced your husband to join us this evening; he plays, if I am not mistaken."

"Never!" replied Mrs. Grimes.

"No! I thought he did," said Mr. Sensible, at

the same time giving his wife a look, which seemed to say "Grimes is deceiving her."

"No, Mr. Sensible, we do not play whist at our house. I do not desire to have the sin of making my son a gambler resting upon my conscience."

"Then I would advise you to play cards with him at home, Mrs. Grimes."

"You do not pretend to tell me that you play cards with your own children?" said Mrs. Grimes, in considerable amazement.

"Why, certainly," said Mr. Sensible. "We spend a part of almost every evening in that amusement with our children; unless we have company to join us in a game, are otherwise entertained, or are engaged in spending the evening elsewhere."

"Well!" said Mrs. Grimes, with an air of perfect astonishment, "I had not the slightest idea that you were such a worldly man, or that you brought up your children in such gayety."

"Mrs. Grimes, allow me to tell you what my uniform practice is. I never attend to business during the evening; and I have made it a rule, ever since I have been a married man, to spend my evenings as much as possible with my family and friends, in the cultivation of social enjoyment. I have always given much time to the amusement of my children, and I think myself a happier and a better man for so doing."

"I am very glad to see gentlemen fond of spending their evenings at home, and making it pleasant for their families; I wish Mr. Grimes was more inclined to it. But I should be very sorry if he should propose to

have a whist table in my house ; it certainly would not add to my happiness. He once said that he wished I would learn to play cards, so that we could make our evenings more cheerful ; but I then expressed my views upon the subject so decidedly that I have not heard it mentioned since. I wish, however, there was some method by which I could induce Theodore to spend his evenings at home. I am sorry to say that they are quite too frequently passed abroad."

"I should think you would be afraid he would learn to play cards among his associates," said Mrs. Sensible.

"Oh no, no fear of that ; for he is aware that it would be a source of great grief to me. No ; I am confident he cannot distinguish one card from another."

"I think you are mistaken," said Mr. Sensible ; "I only judge from his manner of shuffling the cards."

"What ; is he playing ? asked Mrs. Grimes—at the same time looking round at the table placed in the back part of the room in which she was sitting, and around which the young people, having gathered unobserved by her, were engaged in a spirited game of whist.

The mother was rendered almost speechless on seeing her son, her only son, in whom she had placed the most implicit confidence, engaged in playing cards ; an amusement which she considered the most deleterious to moral character, and second to no vice except the practice of frequenting the theatre.

"Do you see what a good player he is ?" asked Mr. Sensible. "He is taking all the tricks. You cannot



convince me that he is not accustomed to the game. See how readily he handles the cards !”

“It cannot be !” exclaimed Mrs. Grimes, utterly surprised, and half inclined to discredit the accuracy of her own vision. “Where could he have learned to play ?”

The young persons were so intent upon the game, and the remarks of the elderly people were made in so low a tone, that the former did not observe that they were the theme of conversation.

“There, Miss Sensible,” said young Grimes, “we are four by cards and two by honors ; and, with what we have already, we count ten. We have won the rubber.”

“Why, Theodore, you are a first-rate player,” said young Sensible. “You have beaten us all. You must play a great deal at home ; do you not ?”

“No, we never play ; that is, we never play in the parlor. They play very often in the servants’ hall. The coachman and waiter are first-rate players ; and, sometimes, when my mother thinks I am in my room studying, I go down and take a hand with them. But I more frequently play with my young associates abroad. Several of us young fellows, who are not allowed to play at home, meet quite frequently at a place in the neighborhood, and have some very spirited games.” The enthusiasm with which the young man expressed himself, plainly evinced his interest in the use of cards.

“Take care that you do not get into the practice of

laying silver on the table," said Miss Sensible, evidently surprised at the development.

"Oh, no ; we hav'nt got to that yet. But I think I could get my living very well with a pack of cards."

During the time that the young man was divulging the secret of his clandestine card-playing, his mother had turned her face from him ; but her attention was given to the conversation, and, consequently, she was compelled to listen to this very painful intelligence. Mr. Sensible noticed her excited countenance, and concluded that a storm was fast gathering, which would burst upon the young man's head at the first opportunity which should be afforded her of procuring a private interview with her son. Regarding her views upon the subject of amusements as erroneous, Mr. Sensible determined, in a spirit of kindness to tell her so, before that interview could be obtained. He thought he saw the error of the course, which was leading the son of a very devoted mother into the walks of immorality ; and he conscientiously desired to give Mrs. Grimes his own views upon the subject, so that she might be enabled to control the young man's passion for card-playing, which had already made him the slave of those twin vices—falsehood and deceit.

Mrs. Grimes, though a lady of strong prejudices, was devoted to her family, and self-denying to a fault, where their interests were concerned. So deeply was the maternal feeling implanted in her breast, that, should occasion require it, she would not hesitate to expose her life for the protection of her only son,

Theodore, from those associations which lead to the formation of irregular or depraved habits.

"My dear," said Mr. Sensible, addressing his wife, "you have not taken Mrs. Grimes into the library, to see our pet improvement."

"No," answered the hostess; "but I will be most happy to do so now, if she will join us."

Mr. Sensible immediately proffered his arm to Mrs. Grimes, and asked her to accompany them into the library.

"Not this evening, I think, Mr. Sensible," said Mrs. Grimes. "I will reserve that pleasure for some future visit. It is nearly time for me to return home, and I fear that if I enter your library, I may forget the hour, and linger too long."

"Oh, no; I will vouch for that," said Mr. Sensible. "I am quite desirous of showing you my late improvements."

Mrs. Grimes reluctantly accepted her host's arm, and was passing with him out of the room, when he remarked that there was really no occasion for haste, that it was yet early, and the young people were enjoying themselves so well, that it would be a pity to interrupt them.

So thought Mr. Sensible, but Mrs. Grimes, who gazed automaton-like at the additional alcove attached to the tastefully-arranged library, filled with valuable, elegant and highly-ornamented books, was inclined to differ with him in opinion. She looked at everything, but answered only in monosyllables. She was too much depressed in spirits, to appreciate a well-arranged

library; but she endeavored to conceal her inward emotion, for she felt that her friends could not sympathize with her ideas regarding amusements.

Mr. Sensible, however, understood the varied workings of the human mind too well, not to discover the cause of this abstractedness; and after exhibiting all there was of interest in the room, he seated Mrs. Grimes beside his wife, on a luxurious sofa, conveniently placed in front of the grate-fire, while he occupied his study chair beside them.

Mrs. Grimes, apparently incapable of controlling herself any longer, said, with a trembling voice, "This has been an eventful evening to me. For the first time in my life I have witnessed a game at cards. Before this evening I would not have believed that I could commit so indiscreet an act; and then, to think how my son has, in your presence, exposed his unparalleled deception!"

"I hope," said Mrs. Sensible, "that in this instance you will regard us as confidential friends. We are, perhaps, most in fault, for we allowed your son to be exposed to the temptation of playing, which has resulted in disclosures that have given you much pain."

"I would not have thought," said Mrs. Grimes, "that my son would have been guilty of such deception, for he is so amiable, kind, and confiding. I would almost have been willing to make oath that he knew nothing of card-playing previous to his visit here this evening."

"How very diversely do different persons regard

amusements," said Mr. Sensible; "in that which I regard as an innocent pastime, and as a means of relaxation and amusement, you seem to discover crime."

"Oh! Mr. Sensible," exclaimed Mrs. Grimes, "you cannot surely call that amusement innocent which tends to engender one of the most formidable vices to which young men fall victims—that of gambling? It introduces a youth into low company, and what is more revolting than its effects? I do assure you, Mr. Sensible, that I am distressed beyond comparison at the discovery I have made this evening of my son's habit of card-playing; beside the additional mortification of learning from his own lips that he has connived with the servants to deceive *me*. It is really too great a burthen for me to rest under;" and, rising from the sofa in great agitation, she said decidedly, "I *must* go home."

"As your friend, Mrs. Grimes," said Mr. Sensible, "I beg you to be again seated, for a short time at least. I desire a little conversation with you before you leave."

"Well," said Mrs. Grimes, returning hurriedly to the place where she had been sitting, and looking very irresolute and discomposed, "if it is any thing comforting I will listen to it."

"There is no person," said Mr. Sensible, "who would avoid gambling and its attendant consequences more carefully than myself; nor is there a man living who has a greater abhorrence for immorality in any form. I feel particularly sensitive upon the subject.

But, Madam, I consider the very best protection a young man can obtain, is refined society and refined amusements. That my remarks may not appear to apply solely to the upper walks of life, I desire to add, that there are doubtless many refined minds among the less wealthy class, whose circumstances debar them from access to that society in which refinement and high intellectual cultivation are most usually sought. The heads of every household should rigidly scrutinize the associates of their youthful members, and bear in mind that neither wealth nor rank most contribute to social qualification. Young people must have amusements, or they cannot be expected to develop agreeable and high-toned characters; old people ought likewise to have a greater share than they commonly obtain."

"I agree with you perfectly, Mr. Sensible, with regard to the necessity of relaxation and diversion; but you must admit that there are other amusements besides card-playing?"

"Most assuredly, very many of them. But you must be aware that young people have a partiality for games of chance; and I know of none that is preferable to whist. Chess is a far more intricate and intellectual game, and I prefer it when in its proper place; but it has not the social advantages of whist. It is evident to my mind that you magnify the importance of cards. You are more strongly prejudiced against them than I am in their favor; but, so far as my own observation extends, the moment you prohibit them, that moment you increase their value tenfold to the prohibited party.

Now, I may be wrong and you may be right. Let us compare notes. From your own remarks, as well as those of your son, I infer your course of practice. I will now detail to you our mode of operation.

“It is the custom of myself and wife to spend our evenings very socially. After the active duties of the day have been disposed of, if the evening is to be passed at home, the parlor being well lighted and warmed, my wife and daughters bring down their work or their books, when my son and myself join the family circle, ready for whatever may present, of interest, for relaxation, amusement, or intellectual enjoyment. In one part of the room you will invariably see the card-table or the chess-table—in another the ladies’ work-table, and also one well supplied with books, periodicals, and daily papers; seldom an evening passes without the piano being used. All are ready for and happy to receive company, if any chance to favor us with their presence; or, if dependent entirely on our own resources for the means of enjoyment, we frequently all join in the merry dance before the evening closes.

“The whist table, which seems to you so abhorrent, is not always resorted to; we much more frequently give our attention to music, to books, or to social conversation. The card-table, however, is always prepared, and those who desire to are at full liberty to play. I should strictly prohibit gambling were I called upon to do so; but I am happy to say that my example has prevented the necessity of any such decided measure.

My rule is, that if the game does not interest, socially and intellectually, then let it give place to something that combines these requisites.

"My parents," continued Mr. Sensible, "had a strong prejudice against cards, and they endeavored to engraft their ideas upon my mind; but I think I must have been a dull scholar, for I could not conscientiously regard their use to be such a deadly sin as my parents desired me to; and I resolved, while still a minor, that if ever I lived to be my own master, I would make the game of whist an innocent amusement. I think, Mrs. Grimes, that I have succeeded very well; not one of my children are over fond of the game, and, from observation, I think none of them play as well as your son."

"Well, Mr. Sensible," said Mrs. Grimes, who had listened very attentively, her manner meantime gradually changing from a state of nervous excitement to one of calm composure, "I am compelled in honesty to acknowledge that you take a very natural view of the subject. I have no doubt that if this conversation had taken place at an earlier period, I should have been spared the mortification that I have suffered this evening. But, to say the truth, I have been imbued with such strong prejudices against cards, that nothing could induce me to be a spectator of a game of whist. I now see my error, but never before. My husband has not partaken of my prejudice, but, respecting my honesty of purpose, he has of late almost entirely avoided speaking on the subject. Thanks to you, Mr. Sensible, I think I have now some overtures to make to him.



Promise me," she continued, arising from her seat and giving each a hand, "that you will, together with the young ladies and Mr. Frederick, allow us the pleasure of your company on Tuesday evening next; and you must not be surprised if you see the card-table."

"Excellent! capital! just the thing!" exclaimed Isabella, as she finished reading.

"Do you think so?" said her mother.

"Most certainly I do," replied the mother.

"I'll hear your criticisms now," said Mrs. Gray.

"I have none to offer. I would not change one word. But, ma, what induced you to write upon that subject?"

"A desire to expose the errors that we frequently meet with, both in principle and practice."

The mother and daughter continued the conversation for a long time. The discussion of this question led to the introduction of many other interesting and pleasing topics connected with past days, which served agreeably to divert the mind of Isabella, and to cause her to forget the gloomy forebodings which oppressed her when she entered her mother's apartment. The mother was also thereby incited to a continuance of those literary efforts which had ever been congenial to her tastes; and her confidence was strengthened in the opinion that such occupation would prove beneficial to her health, by sustaining her drooping spirits.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## RENEWAL OF NEGOTIATIONS.

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“ I lost a damsel in that hour,  
Of all the land the loveliest flower ;  
Doubloons a hundred I would pay  
And think her ransom cheap that day.”

*Lord Byron.*

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MRS. GRAY and her daughter had, on a cool, bracing morning in the early part of the bright autumnal season, just returned from a visit to Mrs. Montgomery, who had recently returned to the city after a summer residence in the country. Mrs. Gray repaired to her chamber, there to pursue her pleasing daily task, while Isabella remained in the parlor. It was a leisure day with her, as she had no lessons to give, and, after laying aside her bonnet and shawl, she seated herself, with book in hand, in a comfortable old arm chair, flattering herself that she had before her a day of relaxation. Presently she heard some one ring the door-bell; but, it being about the usual hour for the grocer to call, her attention was only momentarily diverted by it, and she was soon again immersed in her book. Could Isabella have been informed at the moment who the applicant

for admittance was, she would, doubtless, have directed the maid to excuse her appearance on some one or other of many pretexts.

Biddy, however, admitted the visitor, and opening the parlor door called out, "Here's a gentleman, Miss Gray." In her own peculiar manner she ushered in Alexander Brown, Esq., much to the amazement of Isabella, at the same time laying his card upon the table.

The surprise of Isabella beggars description. At first she fancied her vision deceived her ; but when Mr. Brown advanced and offered her his hand, there was no room left to doubt that the gentleman standing before her was the identical handsome Mr. Brown, whom she had no particular desire to lay eyes upon again.

Isabella remained seated, (her want of respect for the man not permitting her to rise,) and requested her visitor also to take a chair. This invitation was accepted, and Mr. Brown occupied a seat in front of Isabella. He was in perfect health, and had never looked better. As Isabella conversed with him, which art he understood very well, she mentally acknowledged him to be one of the most handsome men she had ever beheld, and thought that if she could be permitted to enjoy his society on the terms of a mere casual acquaintance, it would be quite endurable. She had such a high appreciation of beauty as to be compensated by it alone in an occasional visitor ; and the long stay Mr. Brown made, as well as his apparent desire to entertain her upon general topics, induced her to hope that such would be the character of their future intercourse.

He had much to say and to communicate about different people, and in regard to events which had transpired in Cincinnati since Isabella's departure from her native city, which gave her an opportunity to make many inquiries relative to friends who had escaped her correspondent's notice. He also gave an elaborate description of his winter's sojourn in New Orleans. The longer he conversed the more egotistical he became; and Isabella was forced, contrary to her inclination, to recognize in her visitor the identical, egotistical, conceited, vain and empty-headed, though very handsome and wealthy, Mr. Brown.

He had evidently endeavored to fascinate by his intelligent conversation, but failed to accomplish his object, though he was not aware of that fact. At length a pause occurring in the discourse, Mr. Brown rested his elbow upon the table, and, supporting his head with his hand, looked at Isabella. He crossed his pedal extremities, glanced at his patent leather boots, then at Isabella, but remained silent. Isabella was more disconcerted and confused by his dumb gaze than was usual with her under any circumstances, and she taxed her brain for some topic which would form an agreeable subject of conversation; but, when about to speak, her eyes rested on the silent gentleman who was looking intently at her, and the words died upon her lips. Feeling somewhat in a comic vein, she reclined in her chair, rested her elbow on its arm, and supported her head by her hand, in an attitude similar to that which Mr. Brown had assumed. She thought, "Well, look

and be silent, if you enjoy it." A person of ordinary penetration would have divined her thoughts from her expression; but penetration was not a characteristic of the handsome but brainless suiter for her hand.

After the parties had remained in this position for some time, (Isabella's eyes being directed to the book lying in her lap,) the silence was broken by the gentleman, who said, in a languid and monotonous tone, "Then your brother is dead, Miss Gray?"

For a moment it seemed to Isabella almost sacrilege that her brother's name should be mentioned at a time when she was occupied with thoughts so foreign to his memory. However, with her usual self-control, she answered, "Yes, Mr. Brown."

"When first informed of his death, I proposed to have been with you much sooner, (a chill ran through Isabella's frame at the mention of death,) to offer you my sympathies, and to tender, if necessary, any assistance in my power to give. But a severe attack of illness is my only apology."

"Ah, indeed! Have you been very ill, Mr. Brown?" asked Isabella, in a tone of voice which seemed to evince an interest, but which was evidently caused by the conversation becoming personal.

"Very," answered the gentleman, his head still resting on his hand, and his eyes on Miss Gray; "very ill, indeed. I thought at one time, Miss Gray, that it was very doubtful whether I should ever behold you again."

"It is exceedingly annoying to be compelled to defer

a journey on account of illness. But you now appear to be in such perfect health (Mr. Brown bowed an acknowledgment to what he was eager to construe into a compliment) that the pleasure you derive from traveling will doubtless be enhanced by your past confinement. So you see, Mr. Brown," continued Isabella, playfully, "that your disagreeable detention is not without its advantages."

"It is not traveling that I most desire," said Mr. Brown.

"Ah, indeed! I supposed you were very fond of it," replied Isabella.

"No, Miss Gray; I care but little for traveling. I much prefer a quiet home, or should if I possessed one worthy the name. My taste decidedly favors the comforts and enjoyments of domestic life. However, for the present it is sufficient happiness for me to be here."

"Yes," replied Miss Gray, "I have no doubt you will enjoy it exceedingly. The autumn is truly the most pleasant season of the year to visit New York."

"The city does not present any strong attractions for me, Miss Gray. On the contrary, I feel but little concern about my location, so that I am afforded an opportunity of extending that sympathy and kindness to my friends which my heart dictates."

"Then you have friends in the city?" inquired Isabella.

"I should be very sorry to doubt it," was Mr. Brown's answer, who endeavored to express by his countenance the tender emotions of his heart.

"I think I can sympathize with you, Mr. Brown," said Isabella. ("Ah!" thought he, "I have touched the right chord this time; she says she can sympathize with me.") "There is, no doubt, much enjoyment to be derived from the society of our friends at all times; but more particularly when we have an opportunity of extending assistance to them in seasons of trouble, and especially when they are in ill health. I have, of late, frequently ministered to the comfort of a sick friend, to whom I have become much attached."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, I suppose some person who has won your affections?"

"There is no doubt of that, Mr. Brown, or I should not have expressed myself so frankly," said Isabella, in a cool, but dignified manner.

"I admire your candor in so readily acknowledging your attachment," was the reply.

"Perhaps I have been too candid," said Isabella. "But you know that the dictates of the heart sometimes induce us to make disclosures beyond the limits of sound discretion, which I fear I may have already done."

Mr. Brown thought he discovered a blush upon the speaker's face, and fancying that it was a true index to her heart's emotions, he relapsed into his silent mood, which Isabella enjoyed much more than before; for at that critical period, every moment of time to her was laden with importance, as she saw unmistakable evidences that another matrimonial negotiation was contemplated, and her efforts were directed to

warding it off by the employment of idle words, and by encouraging long pauses in the conversation, in the hope that her mother might accidentally enter the parlor, and cause a favorable diversion.

Mr. Brown, though still continuing his fixed gaze, broke the silence by inquiring, "Could I be favored with the name, Miss Gray?"

"What name?" asked Isabella.

"The name of the individual who is blessed with your affections," replied the gentleman.

"Mr. Brown, I am not quite certain that it would be discreet," said Isabella, hesitatingly. "Perhaps I had better be a little more cautious and reserved than my natural impulse inclines me to."

"The present is not an opportune time to commence that discipline, Miss Gray, if I may be allowed the privilege of expressing an opinion, for you have already disclosed the existence of your attachment."

"I think, Mr. Brown, you are correct," replied Isabella. "But I can only divulge the name requested, upon the condition that you give me a promise not to raise a point of honor with the said person?"

"Miss Gray, that depends somewhat upon who the person is, and whether their health will admit of it; as you have already informed me that the individual is an invalid." At that moment, however, he had less dread of hearing the name of some suffering invalid, than that the said invalid should prove to be Robert Williams, returned from the land of gold, with broken health. The "green-eyed monster," almost confirmed



him in his surmise that the object of Miss Gray's solicitude was none other than the object of his abhorrence, and that Isabella was daily administering to the restoration of the prostrate health of him on whom she had bestowed her heart.

"No; that will never do, Mr. Brown," said Isabella, quite amused, while Mr. Brown was suffering all the tortures which jealousy and guilt combined can create. "You shall give me a promise, which must be conscientiously, faithfully, and dispassionately reflected upon before it is given; one that I can rely upon, or I shall not divulge the name.

"Very well," said the anxious gentleman, "I grant the promise."

"I am afraid you have not reflected upon it," objected Isabella.

"Yes, Miss Gray, I have," replied Mr. Brown. "I make you a conscientious, sincere promise, that I will not raise a point of honor—which I understand implies that I will not measure paces—with the gentleman."

"But you mistake my meaning, Mr. Brown," rejoined Isabella, "I said nothing about a gentleman!"

"No!" exclaimed the suitor.

"Certainly not," replied the young lady.

"Ha, ha! Miss Gray; ha, ha! I owe you one," said Mr. Brown, evidently much relieved, while Isabella mentally repeated "I owe you one:" an expression of disgust passing over her countenance on hearing a suitor for her hand use such a slang term. But it was soon dispelled by the thought that a man's true

character will never fail to exhibit itself, however strict may be the watch kept over it. Her countenance again resumed an expression of indifference, while Mr. Brown continued the conversation by saying, "Pray do not keep me any longer in ignorance of the name that has afforded us so much pleasantry, which I am to infer is a lady's."

"I alluded to Mrs. Montgomery, our rector's wife, who is fast sinking in a decline, and to whom I have become much attached on account of her many estimable qualities," answered Isabella. She did not impart the information to Mr. Brown for the purpose, or with the expectation, of increasing his interest in her friend's health. It was done more with the view of killing time by the use of words.

Fearing that Isabella's tact in conversation might altogether divert him from his purpose, if he allowed her to take the lead, the wife-hunter determined to no longer delay, but at once to put himself upon what he considered the right track, and by making steady and undeviating advances, he thought the object of his pursuit would, instead of retreating, turn and greet him with a grateful welcome.

"Are you aware, Miss Gray, that I have made this long journey from Cincinnati on purpose to visit you, and again to entreat you to listen to my proposition of marriage, which I am unwilling to believe has been hitherto sincerely and decidedly refused?"

"I regret exceedingly, Mr. Brown," said Isabella,

“that you have put yourself to the inconvenience of making a long journey on my account.”

“I beg pardon, Miss Gray,” replied the suitor; “that remark was made to exhibit my readiness to make personal sacrifices, in the hope of obtaining favor with you.”

“You have asked a question,” continued Isabella, not appearing to heed his apology, “that, with a little reflection, you could yourself best answer. The idea that I could be aware of such a proceeding on your part is entirely at variance with any supposition of my own as to your course, based upon a recollection of our past interviews. That I should have the vanity to believe, for one moment, that you entertained such a feeling of interest for one with whom you have had but a very limited acquaintance, is certainly not very probable.”

“But,” urged Mr. Brown, “you know that short acquaintances often most rapidly mature into life-long friendships.”

Isabella thought it the best remark she had ever heard from his lips, but she replied, “That, Mr. Brown, depends entirely upon congeniality of character.”

“It does somewhat, no doubt,” he replied; “but, in the absence of that quality, which, as I understand you ladies, means the possession of equal literary acquirements—a certain degree of refinement, which you are not warranted in expecting to meet with in our sex,—are there not other compensating qualifications?”

"I know of none," said Isabella. "We might differ as to the meaning of the term; but, in any light in which it may be viewed, congeniality of tastes and character must form the basis of a happy union."

Mr. Brown, still confident of success, resolved now to urge the advantages which would accrue from an acceptance of his proposals. He therefore said, "Miss Gray, it is not discreet for two persons to enter rashly into a matrimonial alliance, of which they may repent when their fate is fixed and unalterable. Too many are blinded by a passion which they call love, when very frequently it is found to be mere fancy. Upon entering into an arrangement in which our future prospects are involved, is it not more discreet for us, as intelligent beings, to carefully look to those pecuniary considerations on which depend our future ease and comfort?"

"Those inducements may influence some persons," was Isabella's indifferent and chilling reply.

"May I not hope," urged the suitor, "that they will have some influence with you, in deciding my own proposition?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Brown; pecuniary advantages can have no weight with me in choosing a partner for life—I cannot barter my future happiness for base pelf."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, "you may think so now, Miss Gray; but I hope to give you different views."

"I beg you will not flatter yourself, Mr. Brown," she replied; "you must have already observed my firmness of character."

"Ha! that's nothing in matrimonial affairs, Miss Gray; we expect to be refused some half dozen times."

"Indeed! is that your expectation?" said Isabella. "We will see how far you have progressed. One, two, this makes three refusals," she continued, jestingly. "Allow me to congratulate you upon such a respectable progress."

"But please, Miss Gray, do not tantalize me," said the gentleman, deprecatingly.

"By no means," replied the fair tormentor, "I have only aided you in defining your position."

"I thank you," said Mr. Brown, bowing low; "but, Miss Gray," he continued, "let me come to the point in question. I am here, as I before told you, for the sole purpose of renewing my petition for your hand. My repeated efforts to secure it ought of themselves to be sufficient proof of my sincerity."

"That you have renewed your addresses, Mr. Brown," replied the lady, "is to me a matter of great surprise, conscious as I am of never having extended to you the least encouragement. Were it otherwise, I should most deeply regret that there is still existing a reason for my declination of your proposals."

"What is that reason?" inquired Mr. Brown.

"It is comprised in a very short sentence, which your own discernment may elucidate."

"Is it the disparity of circumstances?"

"No!" said Isabella, indignantly; "it is simply that I do not love you."

"Ah! Miss Gray," said Mr. Brown, (as he dropped

upon his knees at Isabella's feet, and rested his hand upon the arm of the chair. He was well nigh driven to despair, for the contents of his letter to Mr. Williams, and the recollection of the one which he had destroyed, flitted across his mind, nerving him to an act which he regarded as the most effectual means of success—that of prostrating himself at his fair one's feet,) “pledge me this hand, (attempting unsuccessfully to take her hand,) and your reward shall be myself, my wealth, my all! My dear Miss Gray, grant me this one request,” he exclaimed, in such rapturous strains as almost to induce Isabella to doubt his sanity.

“It cannot be,” she replied; “I cannot grant your request, Mr. Brown. I beg you will rise.”

“Never, never,” said he, “until I have gained the prize I seek. No, never, until I hear you promise that you will be mine.”

“Again I assure you that you never can obtain such a promise.”

“Torture me not, but grant me one ray of hope,” was the vehement reply.

Isabella becoming almost alarmed at seeing a man suing for her hand whose soul was almost devoid of tender emotions, and suing in such a determined, resolute manner, replied with great firmness, “Mr. Brown, for the last time I tell you that your suit is altogether useless, and I insist that you rise from your present posture immediately.”

“Never, never, Miss Gray, without your promise,” exclaimed Mr. Brown.

Isabella attempted to rise for the purpose of calling her mother, but Mr. Brown placed his other hand upon the opposite arm of her chair, and thus prevented her from accomplishing her object. Her chair, fortunately, being mounted on castors, she propelled it suddenly backwards to the distance of some feet, and thus prostrated Mr. Brown on all fours much more suddenly than did his tight-fitting garments enable him to recover himself.

Just at this critical period Mrs. Gray opened the parlor door, and with astonishment saw the gentleman prostrate on the floor; but she retreated without discovering herself to any but her daughter.

“Come in, ma,” exclaimed Isabella; but the request was not responded to.

Mr. Brown having recovered himself, said: “Miss Gray you have insulted a gentleman, and now I warn you to look to the consequences.” His bland smiles had given place to an expression of countenance more easily imagined than described. Though still human, it bore a very diabolical impress.

“Sir, I regard myself as the one insulted,” said Isabella, indignantly. “You have taken advantage of my helpless condition to press your suit in a manner unbecoming a gentleman, for what purpose I am not aware. But this much I do know, that your conduct has never given the slightest evidence of correct principles. I now request you for the last time to leave my presence forever.”

“A needless request, Miss Gray, but one that will

reap its sure reward," said he, in a taunting, significant manner. He then left Isabella's presence, to plan the revenge which he meditated for his keen disappointment. As he gave Isabella a last diabolical glance, it would have been difficult for her to trace a resemblance between the person leaving and the individual who had entered the room some time previously.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE EXPLANATION.

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“There’s a hope for every woe, and a balm for every pain.”

*R. Gilfillan.*

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As soon as Isabella was released from the presence of the man who had assumed the character of a persecutor rather than that of a lover, she immediately sought her mother’s room. She was much agitated by her recent encounter, and the moment her eyes met her mother’s inquiring glance, she exclaimed, in an excited voice and manner—

“I believe I have, at last, effectually released myself from my tormentor.”

“You seem agitated, my dear,” said her mother, quietly.

“You will not be surprised at that,” replied Isabella, “when I describe to you the interview just terminated. That man Brown is a perfect enigma; I cannot understand him.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Mrs. Gray, “have you had another visit from Mr. Brown?”

“Yes; and I believe it will be the last.”

"I should think so, if you remain unmoved by the attitude in which I saw him."

"I cannot comprehend the man's conduct," Isabella replied. "He seems resolved to marry me, without any regard whatever to my wishes. But I think I have put an effectual damper on his hopes this time."

Isabella then related the incidents of his visit, and explained the scene of which her mother was partially a witness.

"'Tis very remarkable," said Mrs. Gray; "and, from my personal observation, I regard it as an uncommon occurrence for a gentleman to press his suit with so much ardor; but, that Mr. Brown should have made advances to you in the first place, is still more remarkable, as your acquaintance with him was very slight."

"That is what I have always thought," replied Isabella. "It would appear that he has taken a fancy that I would make him a good wife, and that he has undertaken to force my consent to the arrangement, without first winning me."

"His views in regard to winning a wife are quite evident," said Mrs. Gray. "Laboring under a very common delusion, he thinks that his all-powerful wealth, added to his good looks, render him so irresistible, that, like Richlieu, he need never say fail. We must acknowledge, that in his person nature has been bountiful to the outward man."

"It is great pity she had not been more lavish upon his intellectual development," added Isabella.

"Better exclaim, it is a pity that society is not more

honest than to nourish conceit with its most palatable diet, until it loathes a more healthful aliment. That man has been opposed, probably, for the first time in his life, and you must be on your guard. You cannot trust in his honor under such circumstances. A dormant spirit of mischief may be aroused, unexpectedly to himself, which will convert him into a fiend. You cannot confidently rely on such an individual, either male or female. Such an one acknowledges no other master than self, and yields to no other influence than impulse."

"I don't fear him," said Isabella.

"Perhaps not," replied her mother; "but you say that he has warned you to beware of his revenge?"

"Yes; but he was angry then. He will feel otherwise when he has time to reflect."

"I would not set too high a value on his powers of reflection."

"Nor would I," said Isabella, "upon an abstract subject. But I cannot do any man the injustice to believe for one moment that he would seek to revenge himself upon a helpless female, merely because she did not think it expedient to marry him. Besides, what can he do? He need not flatter himself that I will yield to the sixth proposal. Never! never! Mr. Brown! It is useless to assert that I do not want money; I honestly confess that I feel every day that its possession would minister toward the gratification of the tastes for which I am indebted to you and my dear father; I have also other and more urgent reasons for

desiring wealth—one of which is, that you might be thereby released from the drudgery of literary labor.”

“Do not let that disturb you, daughter. My labors are like ‘dew upon the dry land;’ they once again revive the joyous hopefulness of youth in my seared and sterile heart. Like the beacon-light to the mariner—my task is always hailed with pleasure.”

“Ah! my dear mother,” said Isabella, with a quivering lip and tear-bedimmed eye, “how kind you are, thus to endeavor to soothe my frequently overburdened mind. Notwithstanding, I sometimes feel that I would cheerfully lay down my life, were it necessary, to insure an easier one for you. But,” she continued, shaking her head, “I cannot marry for it; no, never!”

A pause ensued, which was unbroken for some time. Mrs. Gray was too much impressed with her daughter’s expressions of devoted attachment, to trust herself to speak, and Isabella relapsed into a reverie, the subject of which, judging from the subjoined remarks, was Mr. Brown’s conduct; the excitement caused by his visit not having as yet subsided.

“There is one peculiarity in the man’s conduct which altogether baffles my comprehension, and that is, how he can expect a lady to be won by such treatment. However, that matters but little in my case; for he could not win me, were he ten times as handsome, or did he possess twice the wealth.”

“Those are noble principles, Isabella,” said Mrs. Gray, “and it rejoices my heart to hear you give them expression. They do you great honor, and your re-

ward must necessarily follow, sooner or later. It may not take the form of wealth ; but I am cheered with the belief that such virtue ever has its reward. However, I do not altogether relinquish the hope of again enjoying affluence."

"I fear you are deceiving yourself," said Isabella. "It is well to cherish hope ; but I would prefer having some tangible basis for it."

"I think we have good grounds for such a view of the future. Suppose I succeed as an authoress, and you as a teacher ? We can thus very soon accumulate a competency."

"When we have succeeded in establishing a reputation in our different avocations," still objected Isabella, "we can better determine upon the future."

"We should cherish a living hope," replied Mrs. Gray, "and with persevering industry, it is impossible to say what may be the results."

"I am afraid you will not succeed as an authoress," said Isabella. "Not that I have fears regarding your merits as a writer, but the effort necessary to place the first works of an author fairly before the public, is very considerable ; and, if I am correctly informed, requires influential aid."

"I shall soon be able to test the merits of my literary efforts," replied her mother.

"I am very impatient to see the manuscript of your book ; when will it be finished ?" inquired Isabella.

"In a very few days," answered her mother.

"Cannot you tell me something about it ?"

"Of course I can," said Mrs. Gray, "but I would rather not. I prefer placing it in your hands when finished; I should then have greater confidence in your criticisms."

"You do not surely design that I shall criticise your work?"

"Why not, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Gray.

"A daughter cannot criticise a mother's writings," said Isabella, "it is not possible; the existing sympathy is too great; besides partiality will blind the child to the faulty style of the parent."

"But that feeling must be overcome," remarked Mrs. Gray; "I have confidence in your taste, and I am satisfied that your criticism will be honest and faithful."

"Well, of course I shall do my best," said Isabella; "but, for the present, suppose we take a walk in the fresh air? I desire to procure some new music for my pupils. To-morrow I give lessons, and Ernestine Lincoln deserves a new piece; she is making fine progress in her music. She is a fine girl, and it is a great pity that her mother is not more refined."

Mrs. Gray having consented to join her daughter in a walk, they were very soon threading their way amid the busy throng.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE TEMPTER PREVAILS.

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Base man ! When thou hast hurled  
Thy poison'd dart upon thy helpless victim ;  
Go hide in some dark, solitary cave ;  
And cease to call thyself a man.  
Helpless ! not so. The God of Heaven  
Bends low to hear her burden'd sigh ;  
And with the speed of lightning's play,  
Sends forth her Guardian Angels to attend  
And save her from the 'vengeful-blow.

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SHOULD any of our readers, after perusing the details of Mr. Brown's last visit to Isabella, be disposed to regard it as an overdrawn picture, we beg they will recall to mind many events in their own lives, which attest the soundness of the axiom that "truth is stranger than fiction." The motives that prompt the action of a selfish individual, are frequently strange and unfathomable to persons actuated by more elevated and generous impulses.

Who is there to oppose or thwart the desires of a vain and selfish man of leisure ? Who will undertake to breathe into his ear a single word, which shall mili-

tate against the idol of self, at whose shrine he worships? Woe be to him who attempts it, and woe to the party who may chance to interpose an obstacle between such a man, and the darling hopes he may cherish.

Wealth too frequently removes its possessor to a fearful distance from healthful criticism. He finds himself the subject of general admiration; all that he does and says is applauded; and everything which he possesses is regarded as tending to elevate him above the mass of his fellow-men. The secret whisperings of envy, and the just criticisms of observant friends are equally lost to him—they never reach his ears. Such a man passes through life without leaving any impress upon the societary record. It was not merely the possession of wealth which fostered selfishness to such a deleterious extent in the mind of Mr. Brown; it was the personal homage and deference which his riches never failed to secure him. Man prides himself upon his ability to detect the flattery of the sycophant; yet, the delicious cup is too frequently drained to the bottom, without pausing to note that self is reflected in the draught.

Immediately after leaving Isabella, Mr. Brown, with rapid stride, and unmindful of surrounding objects, sought his lodgings at the Astor House. He must now relinquish his long cherished hopes, and resign the coveted prize for the possession of which he had bartered his honor. Had he not committed that first fatal error in uttering a falsehood, had he not, actuated



by the frantic impulses of bitter revenge, destroyed Mr. Williams' letter, he would long since have forgotten Miss Gray.

"Fool that I was," thought he, when he had reached his own room, closed the door, and thrown himself on a lounge in front of the fire; "yes; fool that I was, to imagine, for one moment, that I could conquer such a proud, intellectual, cold-hearted beauty. I would like to have had the knot once tied; she would then have learned who would be master. But she shall yet be taught that lesson; for I will have my revenge. I must now, however, turn my attention to another disagreeable subject. Ere long Mr. Williams will probably turn up, and make search for his long-cherished idol: Then there will be an inquiry about that letter? and it will be asked why I am not married? As a necessary result, the engagement that I have so confidently announced will be denied, together with all of that d——d stuff, which will drive me mad." Rising, he paced hurriedly up and down the room, and as he did so, he ran his fingers through his hair, thereby giving himself more the appearance of a maniac than of a beauty. While in this state of excitement he was startled by a knock at his door.

"Come in," he called out in an unusually loud voice.

One of the waiters belonging to the hotel entered and handed him a card.

"Ah, McPherson!" said Mr. Brown, looking at the

card with a scowl. "I can't see him; tell him I am not at home."

"The gentleman's very anxious to see you, sir. This is his second call within a few hours."

"Well; what if it is?" was the rejoinder. "Who knows it is his second call?"

"I do, sir; there's the other card," said the waiter, pointing to the table.

"Oh! the d——l it is!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, taking it up and looking at it, and then at the image of himself, reflected in the mirror directly opposite. He was apparently unconscious that his excitement was perceptible from his outward appearance. "Does he know that I am at home?"

"Not positively." He said, however, that he would wait in the reading-room until you returned, for he must see you."

"Show him up,—show him up," was the reply. After the servant had left the room, the excited man endeavored to compose himself, in order that he might meet his visitor calmly. He brushed his hair, straightened his collar, pulled down his vest, and coaxed his features into a meaningless smile; indeed, he began to feel that he was once more the handsome Mr. Brown, when the door opened, and his visitor was announced.

"Ah, how do you do, Mr. Brown?" "How do you do, Mr. McPherson?" were the mutual salutations.

"This is an unexpected pleasure Mr. McPherson," said Mr. Brown, as the gentlemen seated themselves

upon the sofa. "I had not anticipated meeting you here, although, I must say I had a secret hope of doing so."

"It is not a greater or a more unexpected pleasure to yourself than to me," replied Mr. McPherson.

"Have you been long here?"

"No; I'm only here for a little relaxation from the pleasures and excitement of my summer sojourn at Newport."

"Where do you stop?"

"At the St. Dennis. It was merely by accident that I learned you were here. I was taking a stroll down town this morning, when it occurred to me to drop in and look at the register of this house, and by doing so I discovered your name. When did you arrive?"

"Only a day or two since."

"How have you been since we last met? I have been expecting to hear of your marriage. Has the happy event taken place without my knowledge?"

"Not exactly; I do not intend to resign my liberty quite so easily."

"Then the letter which agitated you so much was unfavorable? Ha, ha! I have often thought of that letter, Brown."

"I do not see the necessity for your inference. I only say that I prefer liberty," replied Mr. Brown, in a somewhat reserved manner.

"My friend, allow me to give you a word of advice," said Mr. McPherson.

“Certainly, I am always open for a friendly suggestion.”

“’Tis time you were married. And I can tell you where to find a lady who will just suit you.”

“Ah, indeed! But why do you consider it so important that I should marry? It cannot be on account of my age. You do not call a man old at thirty?”

“No; your age is just right. That is one argument against delay. The longer marriage is postponed, the more difficult will you be to please, and the less likely will yourself and spouse be to assimilate when married. I speak from experience as to the difficulty of selecting. I was engaged when a youth to a lovely girl, who died just on the eve of our intended marriage, and I have seen no one since who quite realizes my ideas of a wife for myself, but many who would make good wives for others. I am very domestic in my tastes and inclinations, and would prefer matrimony, but I find the longer marriage is deferred, the more remote is the prospect of its final accomplishment. But why should you delay; who have a fortune with which to support a wife’s passion for shopping, as well as all the elegant extravagances in which the dear creatures must be indulged? I say, such a good looking man as you, (giving Mr. Brown a familiar tap on the shoulder) should not be living a lonely life in a hotel.”

“I’m in no hurry, Mr. McPherson; not the least. But who is this lady you recommend so highly?”

“Oh yes—it is a lady who —— but I think I will not tell you, Brown.”

“Why not?”

“Tell me first how you would like to marry a music teacher?” asked Mr. McPherson, looking Mr. Brown steadily in the face.

The latter gentleman had at that moment no knowledge of any music teacher but Miss Gray, as he had been informed by herself that such was her occupation. She having full possession of his mind at that time, he would almost have testified that there was no other with whom his name could be connected, and he readily surmised that his friend had come to taunt him.—“But,” thought he, “McPherson will find I am too dull to understand him.”

“Me marry a music teacher!” was the answer, accompanied by an indignant look.

“I beg your pardon, my friend. I presume the lady would not be likely to suit you,” said Mr. McPherson, reclining himself upon the sofa still more leisurely than before, while a smile flitted across his countenance.

Observing that a change of subject would be agreeable, he said—“Come, Brown, let me hear something of your movements since I last saw you in Cincinnati. Where have you passed the summer?”

“I will first tell you that I passed the winter in New Orleans.”

“Indeed! I had serious thoughts of going thither myself; and I would have done so had I known of the inducement which your society would have offered to me.”

“I should have liked nothing better than to have met you there, McPherson.”

"How do you like New Orleans?"

"I like it very well; I enjoyed myself exceedingly while there. But I will never again go to New Orleans to spend the winter."

"Why not?" inquired McPherson.

"Because I contracted one of those horrible southern fevers while there, and came very near dying after I returned home. I probably should have sank under it, had it not been for my determination to recover."

"Ha, ha, Brown! you owe much to your resolution, if it has saved your life?"

"I do not say that it saved my life; probably that had less to do with it, notwithstanding my assertion, than the pure air and salubrious waters of Saratoga."

"The moralist would tell you, my friend, that all were instruments in His hands," said Mr. McPherson, pointing upward.

"I don't deal with any such animals as moralists," replied Mr. Brown. "But let me hear more about this lady. Who is it that you think would make me such a good wife? providing I should be successful in obtaining her consent to the arrangement."

"Ah, that is an admitted point to start upon; no lady could refuse the offer of your hand."

This last remark produced in Mr. Brown's mind a feeling of self-satisfaction, such as invalids frequently experience in their physical frame upon breathing their native air. He was himself again. The intoxicating sounds of flattery had again floated to his ear, while at the same time they assured him that his com-

panion was entirely ignorant of the obstacles which he had so recently been compelled to contend with. Having such an agreeable assurance, Mr. Brown bowed his acknowledgment and again insisted upon hearing the lady's name.

"Do you think you can refrain from again becoming indignant at the idea of conferring your name upon a music teacher?"

"I don't know;—but I will try, if you will not keep me in suspense too long."

"If I am not very much mistaken in the lady, you might esteem yourself favored in obtaining such a wife, although I have seen her but once. I allude to a young lady who teaches music in Mrs. Lincoln's family."

"Who is Mrs. Lincoln?" inquired Mr. Brown.

"Do you not know Mrs. Lincoln of Fifth avenue?"

"No; is she wealthy?"

"Yes, very; her residence is a sufficient guarantee for that."

"Very true. Well, Mrs. Lincoln is all right; now for the model young lady who teaches music."

"I have but little to say concerning her, as I am entirely unacquainted, except that she is a beautiful girl, and has the bearing and dignity of a queen. It is strange that I should have thought of you the moment I saw her. Upon my word, Brown, she would make you a splendid wife. She is only fit for an Apollo."

Mr. Brown, though not yet certain that it was Miss Gray, had his suspicions; for he knew that she was

teaching music; but he was ignorant of the locality of her labors.

“Tis very unselfish in you, McPherson, to wish me in possession of such a beautiful wife; why do you not propose to her yourself?”

“Oh, Brown! it is unkind in you to jest on facts. The idea of forcing, for a lifetime, such an ugly face as mine into the presence of so much beauty, would be too selfish, by far. But, all jesting aside, she is an elegant woman, and has a remarkably intelligent expression of countenance. However, my aunt fancies there must be some mystery about her, as she is so very retiring. She is very reserved, converses but little, gives her lesson and then takes her leave.

“Her name?” inquired Mr. Brown.”

“I think Mrs. Lincoln called her Miss Gray. She dresses in deep mourning and resides somewhere in Brooklyn.”

Mr. Brown was by this time too much agitated to remain quiet in his seat; and, rising in a hurried manner, as if apparently the recipient of some astounding intelligence, he placed himself directly in front of his companion, saying, “You do’nt tell me, Mr. McPherson, that Miss Gray is giving instruction in a respectable family?” Could he have had the courage to say to the tempter at that fatal moment “Get thee behind me, Satan,” he would have been saved both present and future trouble; but he could not let so brilliant an opportunity pass to slake his thirst for revenge. He had warned the proud beauty to expect it, and in this



instance he determined to take good care that she should not be disappointed.

"You cannot doubt Mrs. Lincoln's standing?" said Mr. McPherson.

"Of course not," replied Mr. Brown.

"You seem agitated," remarked his friend.

"I have cause for it," said the traducer; I am unwilling to see the innocence of childhood poisoned by contact with vice."

"I have no doubt you are," was the reply; "a man with your kindness of heart would naturally feel thus. But let me know what is wrong with Miss Gray. You have aroused my curiosity; for my aunt is very vigilant in protecting her daughter from erroneous influences."

"Then she had better dismiss Miss Gray from her house."

"Do you think so?" inquired Mr. McPherson.

"I am satisfied of it," said Mr. Brown.

"Are you acquainted with her?" asked McPherson.

Significantly shrugging his shoulders, Mr. Brown said, "You know Mr. McPherson we do not like to prate of our gallantry; but you ought to have sufficient confidence in me not to hesitate, when I tell you that she is not a proper person to be admitted into your aunt's family in any capacity."

"Mr. Brown," replied his friend, "if I am correct in the inference I draw from your remarks, I should say that you were not acting an honorable part by the young lady, and that you should take better care of her than to allow her to teach music for a maintenance."

"I have given her up altogether—she is more than I can manage," said Mr. Brown, with as contemptuous an expression as he was capable of assuming.

"The d—l she is!" ejaculated McPherson. "Then I must lose no time in breaking the matter to Mrs. Lincoln; for she would never forgive me if she should subsequently learn I had neglected to inform her. My cousin, a fine young lady, whom I should regret exceedingly to have subjected to the contamination of such society, is becoming very fond of Miss Gray."

"Ah, yes; no doubt," said Mr. Brown, "Miss Gray is an adept in the art of fascination. She will not only deny every thing, but will endeavor also to make Mrs. Lincoln believe she is the victim of persecution. I should advise your aunt not to hazard an interview with her, but to send her word that her services are no longer required."

Mr. McPherson, who was apparently in such deep meditation that he either did not hear, or did not heed, Mr. Brown's advice, replied, as if communing with his own thoughts, "It seems rather singular that she should be so well educated! They say she is a fine musician."

"I must do her the justice to say she is very well educated," was the answer; "but, you know, McPherson, that it is not always persons in the inferior ranks of life who enter the paths of immorality."

"True," said Mr. McPherson. "I suppose she is some romantic girl, who has been disappointed in love. My aunt was telling me, yesterday, that she thought her a very mysterious person; as she takes no interest

in any one but Miss Lincoln, to whom she is very agreeable."

That Isabella was reserved when in Mrs. Lincoln's company was very true. In the first place there was no congeniality of feeling, and their intercourse was chillingly ceremonious. She was compelled to feel, that between herself and the mistress of that elegant establishment there existed an immense gulf, which could only be crossed by the bridge of sycophancy. Isabella spurned the use of base means to accomplish any purpose, no matter how desirable. In the second place, she had no leisure for tedious and meaningless conversation. Her duties were well defined and her utmost efforts were directed to discharging them with credit to herself and advantage to her pupils. Consequently, as Isabella was not a lady of leisure, it was not surprising that her habitual reserve should have been criticised by Mrs. Lincoln, who, owing to her ignorance, miscalled it mystery.

"I think I shall be obliged to shorten my visit, in order that I may call on Mrs. Lincoln before dinner," said Mr. McPherson, rising to leave. "When shall I see you at the St. Dennis?"

"Oh, very soon," answered Mr. Brown, as he stretched himself in a self-satisfied manner; "very soon; that is, if I should not leave town."

"Leave town!" exclaimed McPherson. "Why, my friend, what are you talking of? You have but just arrived. Where do you think of landing at in your next flight?"

"I have not quite decided whether I shall take a flight; but I am restless, and desire a change of scene. The truth of it is, McPherson, I have not yet recovered from the effects of that d—lish long fit of illness."

"You appear to be remarkably well now; I never saw you look better."

"Yes; I know it; but I am not strong; my nerves are very weak, and I am easily excited."

"I discovered that. You ought to take a trip to sea."

"That is just what I have been thinking of since I arrived in this city. I may embark on the next steamer, cross the big pond, and visit the cities of London and Paris."

"That is a good idea. I wish you could defer your voyage for two months; I would then join you."

"Can't you go now?" said Mr. Brown.

"No," replied Mr. McPherson, shaking his head; "that is not to be thought of. I must depart next week for Boston, to look after some money matters there, before I can go abroad. I have spent the greater part of the summer at Newport; and, you know it is not an easy matter to live there without replenishing a little. However, I shall see you again, Mr. Brown, before you leave."

"I may conclude not to go," replied that gentleman.

"Good morning, Mr. Brown," said McPherson, "Take good care of yourself."

"Good morning," responded Mr. Brown, as his visitor passed out of the door, which was immediately closed, and the occupant left to commune with his thoughts.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A FRESH SORROW.

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“They have smitten my brain with a piercing pain.”

*Barry Cornwall.*

“Thus let me hold thee to my heart,

And every care resign :

And shall we never, never part,

My life—my all that’s mine.”

*Oliver Goldsmith.*

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WHAT can be more delightful to the inhabitants of the great metropolis of New York, who enjoy the felicity of out-door exercise, than a bright, clear, silvery morning in October, when, drawing closely around them their outward garments, they inhale the pure, healthful breeze wafted from one of the loveliest bays, upon which the sun ever shone, or the eye of man rested.

In the country, at the period with which our story is connected, the beautiful and varied verdure of the forest was giving place to gorgeous autumnal tints, as well as to the sear and faded falling leaves. But, in town the change was of a different nature, and rather lent its aid to enliven the scene. Citizens were returning from their summer haunts, and all the thorough-

fares were thronged with visitors from the country. Some of the latter came merely in pursuit of pleasure, and to note fashion's slightest variation; others, with a view of purchasing their fall and winter stock of goods; and yet other many, for no purpose beyond the gratification of taking a stroll in New York's gay streets and avenues, being enlivened by contact with its busy, bustling, energetic throng, feasting on delicacies at the splendid restaurants and hotels, and passing away evenings by joining in the merry crowd of those who frequent the various places of amusement, where art is so severely taxed to divert the mind.\*

On such a morning as we have just described, Isabella took a seat in one of the Fulton-ferry stages, for the purpose of visiting her different pupils in the upper part of the city. As she passed through Broadway, it occurred to her that the city presented a more than usually cheerful aspect. This conclusion was in some degree, no doubt, the result of her increasing buoyancy of spirits, for, with the return of the citizens to their homes, her prospects were brightened by the assurance of an increase of pupils. After enjoying a month's respite from labor, by the absence of her pupils from the city, she had but a few days previously recommenced giving lessons with renewed energy, and with added confidence in her own qualifications as an instructor of music. She also hoped to make the acquaintance of some of the more prominent masters in the profession, who were already returning to town;

to a few of whom she had been kindly provided with letters of introduction. She now looked forward with agreeable anticipations to the period when she could take rank in her new profession.

The day dreams of youth were fast receding from view, and giving place to those stern realities of life which had hitherto been known to her only by description. Isabella however derived consolation from every ray of encouragement. She congratulated herself upon her good fortune in having obtained so kind a patroness as Mrs. Brewster, with whom she had enjoyed unaffected intercourse; an intimacy without familiarity—such as a lady never fails to extend to her equal under any circumstances.

In a much greater degree than Isabella anticipated, had she found her duties in Mrs. Brewster's family mingled with pleasure. The interest she felt in the children had daily increased, as their varied characters were unfolded to view; and her little namesake, the spiritualized "Belle," had twined herself as closely around her heart, as the tiny arms of the little fairy were frequently clasped about her person.

Mrs. Brewster, from her attention to personal appearance and her style of living, would readily be recognized as a fashionable lady. This is all very well, when fashion and public opinion are not made the basis of every movement and action. Such was evidently not the case—with Mrs. Brewster; but it was too palpably apparent in Isabella's other patroness—Mrs. Lincoln. To her, fashion was the polar star: it made a wreck of her



native good sense, and poisoned the impulses of an otherwise excellent heart. Had the latter lady possessed one faithful friend who would, after the acquisition by her husband of an ample fortune, have admonished her of the importance of devoting at least a small portion of time to intellectual culture, her happiness would have been enhanced, and the society in which her wealth had secured her a position, would have been spared the mortification of hearing the title "Mrs. Partington," significantly applied to her. She would have been enabled to think and to decide for herself—and her judgment would not have always conformed to what Mrs. So-and-so says.

But those who are not gifted by nature with much originality of mind, do not think it singular that they voluntarily neglect those means of mental cultivation within their reach, because they are ignorantly blind to the resultant advantages. Those who are capable of discerning the undue estimate of outward appearances which a suddenly acquired fortune often impresses upon the mind of its possessor, are censurable for not warning their friend against such a baneful influence. Under these circumstances they should be what they profess—a true friend. Instead of joining in the cry of "*un parvenu*," they should encourage their wealthy friend to a discreet use of his ample means; and teach him that riches has given a command of time, which cannot be more profitably employed than in devoted attention to intellectual culture. Happy indeed, should I feel, could I induce many, who are now suffering from

ill health and *ennui*, caused by a life of luxurious idleness, or from lack of such healthful occupation as would impart vigor and activity to the mind, to pause and reflect, not only upon the vast advantages which they pass by unnoticed, but also upon the fact that time misspent is lost irrecoverably.

Should the soil be found too barren for cultivation, the faithful monitor will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has discharged his duty, and that will be sufficient compensation for all his efforts.

During the performance of her duties at Mrs. Brewster's on the morning alluded to, Isabella noticed no change. The lady's manner was even more cordial than formerly. The children were as usual delighted to see Miss Gray; and "Belle" intimated that she would be so very happy to sing for her teacher, that she was forced to yield a consent, contrary to her judgment, although in unison with her inclination to listen to the child's bird-like song. The lessons ended, Isabella left Mrs. Brewster's with a feeling of greater happiness and buoyancy than she had experienced during many weary months.

Had she been called upon to define the cause of her present flow of spirits, her answer would doubtless have been,—“All nature conspires to make me feel so; the air I breathe imparts vigor to my heart, and my burden becomes lighter by practice.” Thoughts like these were unconsciously passing through her mind, as the servant at Mrs. Lincoln's opened the massive street door in answer to Isabella's summons. According to her usual custom, she inquired for Miss Ernestine.

"Mrs. Lincoln says she's engaged, ma'am," was the reply.

"Not Mrs. Lincoln, William," said Isabella, as she walked into the hall, anticipating the happiness her pupil would exhibit, when she presented her the piece of new music she then held in her hand. The waiter still remained at the door, evidently not quite certain whether Miss Gray would immediately retire, on being informed that the ladies could not be seen. "I asked for Miss Ernestine," continued Isabella. "Tell her Miss Gray has come to give her a music lesson."

"I understand you, ma'am," said the tidy-looking boy, closing the door—Isabella having entered with the apparent expectation of remaining; "but Mrs. Lincoln told me to say that Miss Ernestine is engaged, and that she isn't a going to take any more music lessons."

"Is the young lady ill?" inquired Isabella.

"No ma'am; not as I know of; she looks very well; but I guess by her actions she's feeling bad about something—oh! I'd like to forgot; Mrs. Lincoln told me to ask Miss Gray to send up her bill when she came, and she would pay it."

"Send up my bill! It's very strange!" said Isabella, in an under tone. "Go, tell Mrs. Lincoln that Miss Gray wishes to speak with her. Here, take her my card, that there may be no mistake." Isabella meantime seated herself in the elegant reception-room.

In a very short space of time the servant presented himself at the door, and said, "Mrs. Lincoln says

she can't possibly see you." He waited there, apparently to observe the effect of his message.

"William, did you tell Mrs. Lincoln who it is that wishes to see her? Did you give her my card?"

"Oh yes, Miss; and she just shook her head and said, 'Tell her I can't, nor shan't see her; but I'll pay her bill, if she'll send it up.'"

"I do not understand it," said Isabella.

"Neither do I, Miss," remarked the waiter.

"William," said Isabella, giving the boy a searching glance, "is your mistress ill, or positively engaged?"

"Neither, ma'am, that I know of."

She felt mortified at having interrogated a servant so closely about his mistress; but there was no alternative. No other means presented for obtaining information in regard to Mrs. Lincoln's sudden change of purpose.

"Is Mrs. Lincoln alone?" inquired Isabella.

"Only Miss Ernestine is with her," said the waiter.

"Ernestine knows that I am here, and does not come running to see me!" thought Isabella. "It baffles my comprehension. However, I will try it once more; I must see her."

"William!" said she, assuming a stern look and a commanding voice.

"Yes, Miss."

"Go tell your mistress that I must see her before I leave the house. Ask her if she will please to favor me with an interview."

"Yes, Miss," said he, turning to go.

"Stop, William! Tell her that I shall esteem it a personal favor. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Miss."

Isabella felt in some degree humiliated by her present position; but, being conscious that her right to demand an explanation was fully equal to that which Mrs. Lincoln had assumed in refusing one, she resolved to obtain an interview, if possible. While pondering over the cause of this mysterious conduct, she heard approaching footsteps in the hall, and Mrs. Lincoln soon entered the room, with an assumed frigidity of manner, which, it was evident, she had predetermined to maintain.

Isabella arose and bade her "Good morning;" but she was not quite certain that any response was made to her salutation. Her courage, however, being equal to the occasion, she thus addressed her patroness: "Mrs. Lincoln, I have been told by your servant that my lessons to your daughter must be discontinued."

"Well; isn't that sufficient?" replied Mrs. Lincoln.

"I think not, madam, unless accompanied with some explanation."

"I differ with you. People that I employ usually understand that when I say I don't want them any longer, it's quite enough," said Mrs. Lincoln in such a taunting manner, that it required considerable effort for Isabella to control her temper; yet, as the cause for this unaccountable conduct must be ascertained, she with great difficulty retained her self-possession.

"You are aware, Mrs. Lincoln, that to me this is

very unexpected. My reputation as a teacher being involved, I regard as a sufficient reason why I should demand, and you accord, an explanation. I ask nothing more. It is not my desire to press my services upon you ; but I fancy there may be some existing misunderstanding which can be satisfactorily removed, if I am permitted to have an opportunity for so doing."

"Now I'll just tell you what it is, Miss Gray,"—said Mrs. Lincoln, in her usual vulgar manner, "I'm not going to get into any muss in your affairs."

"By no means, madam," replied Isabella, "I am not aware that I have any affairs to annoy you ; I merely ask you to deal candidly by me, and inform me why your daughter has discontinued her lessons ; or, I should say, whether you are dissatisfied with my method of imparting instruction. It may be that you have reasons entirely irrelevant to myself, or my capacity as a teacher ; and candor demands at your hands a full explanation."

Isabella's manner was so lady-like, and gentle, that the frigid nature of Mrs. Lincoln began to relax, and seating herself, she said, in a commanding tone:—"Sit down, Miss Gray." The ladies being both seated, the aristocratic lady proceeded to say :

"I've always liked you very well as a teacher, Miss Gray ; and I've liked you well enough in every respect, till now ; though I can't say I'm much acquainted with you. But Ernestine seems to be better acquainted with you and loves you better than a most any teacher she ever had ; and she feels dreadfully because she

isn't a going to take lessons of you any more ; and I'm real sorry myself that anything has happened to make me think different of you from what I did at first."

"What does the woman mean!" thought Isabella.

"But you know" continued Mrs. Lincoln, "that we are bound to take care of our children, and see that they don't have anything to do with people of bad habits."

"Certainly," answered Isabella, all unconscious that the last remark was intended to apply to herself; she could not think it possible that it was so intended. A silence of some minutes ensued, which was broken by Isabella, who again besought Mrs. Lincoln for an explanation. She said, "Do please, madam, explain what is the difficulty. You say that you are satisfied with my instruction, and yet you allude to something as having happened, of which I am ignorant. Whatever that circumstance may be, I insist upon speedily being made acquainted with it. I cannot endure this suspense." The latter remark was made with such spirit and determination, that it aroused her antagonist to a sense of the propriety of either at once communicating the substance of her objections, or of positively refusing so to do.

Mrs. Lincoln was at heart a true woman, and shrank from giving pain; but she saw, or thought she saw, no alternative. And, as she honestly believed that she was then conversing with a fallen human being, she asked herself—"Who is better fitted to cast the first stone than I, whose life has been without reproach, and

to whom so many look for the protection of society? If I turn her off, and say nothing, I may lose the opportunity of reclaiming a poor wanderer. Yes; I think I must tell her the whole matter, though Mr. McPherson thinks I had better not. But I'd better; for she'll bear it from me, when she wouldn't from a poor woman."

Such was the nature of the momentary reverie of the lady who imagined herself seated upon a lofty pinnacle, and dispensing healing reproofs to the deluded at its base.

"Miss Gray," said she "I hate to tell you, for I don't believe you are so bad, but what you'll hate to have it known; but I will, for I feel that its my duty. Yesterday I heard that your character was not what it ought to be."

"My character! What of my character!" exclaimed Isabella.

"You know you saw Mr. McPherson one day in my parlor," said Mrs. Lincoln.

"Yes; I recollect him," replied Isabella.

"Well, he's a very nice young gentleman, a nephew of mine, and he thinks all the world of me; and well he might, for it is through my influence that Mr. Lincoln is so kind to him, and makes him such splendid presents. He made us a visit when he was going on to Newport, and my husband gave him a check for \$500. I don't want to boast of Mr. Lincoln's liberality, for I don't think that's as much his doings as it is mine; but I just thought I would mention this, to show you that Mr. McPherson's so grateful for all



these things, that he wouldn't have any harm come to me for anything, and he loves Ernestine to distraction. I really believe he thinks as much of her as he could if she was his sister."

Isabella patiently listened to all this rhodomontade, wondering at the same time how the enigma was to be solved; or how Mr. McPherson, a man whom she had seen but once in her life, could be in any way connected with her affairs. Mrs. Lincoln continued,

"He took a great liking to you as soon as he saw you, and talked a good deal about you, and said that he meant to get acquainted with you, and all that sort of thing. But when he was down town one day he met with an old acquaintance of his, who he thinks a deal of. He's a very rich old bachelor, and such a very handsome man, and he was a joking him about getting married, and told him that he knew of a lady who would be just the wife for him.—And he asked who it was?—And my nephew described you to him, and when he told him your name,—the gentleman was terribly shocked!—and he felt dreadfully to think that you had got into such a respectable family to teach, and wished him to inform me at once that you was not a suitable person to be with my daughter.—And he said a good many things about you, that Mr. McPherson didn't think was proper to tell me of."

By this time Isabella had risen from her seat in a state of great excitement, and in a commanding tone demanded the name of her slanderer.

"It's no matter about that," said Mrs. Lincoln, coolly.

“I demand the name,” said Isabella, in a very imperative manner.

“I should think you would know the name of any person who seems to know you so well,” replied Mrs. Lincoln, tauntingly; at the same time adding, “you can’t make me believe that you are so very innocent, when he says that you have lived with him so long. I guess that you won’t be much surprised when I tell you that it is Mr. Brown, who used to live in Cincinnati.”

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed Isabella, clasping her hands. Then, dropping her eyes upon the carpet, she added, “Is it possible?”

Her face became so deadly pale, that her accuser becoming alarmed, said, “You may be very innocent, but”—

“Stop!” exclaimed Isabella, in an authoritative tone, and with a manner that sealed the speaker’s lips; “breathe not on my name another reproachful word. ’Tis infamy! ’Tis sacrilege! I will not hear it.” So saying, she turned to leave the room.

“But your bill is not paid, Miss Gray,” said Mrs. Lincoln, half terrified at the stern dignity and pallid countenance of her victim.

Isabella’s first impulse was, to depart without the amount of her bill, as her whole frame was in a violent state of agitation; but recollecting the all-powerful influence of money in warding off slander, she took from her pocket a memorandum-book, and casting up the amount due her, gave it to the lady. While Mrs.

Lincoln was fumbling in her pocket for her purse, she felt that the opportunity for admonishing Isabella against continuing in her presumed bad course, was passing by unimproved; and, therefore, she nerved herself to say a few words, notwithstanding Isabella's agitation, which was too great to be concealed. "I thought," said she, "you would have taken this more humble; that I might have given you some advice." Isabella received her money without making any comment on this speech, and hurriedly walked out of the house, the atmosphere of which was almost stifling to her.

The bracing exterior air aided slightly to cool her fevered brow, but could not reach the volcano burning fiercely within. Beckoning to the driver of a stage, more from habit than with any fixed purpose, she seated herself in the vehicle, and soon relapsed into a total unconsciousness of all surrounding objects, until the stage arrived at the Ferry, where she alighted, mechanically stepped on board the boat, crossed to the opposite side of the river, with hurried steps traversed the route to her residence, and entering it, sought her mother's room. Mrs. Gray was first apprized of her daughter's presence, by feeling her arms clasped around her neck, while she sobbed and wept as though her heart would break. The volcano had found a vent in time to save her reason.

Isabella's tears flowed long and abundantly. Her mother's discerning eye was not slow to discover that they were caused by an anguished heart; and observing

that her daughter was incapable of making any explanation, she led her to a lounge, removed her bonnet and shawl, and applied such refreshing restoratives as a mother's heart never fails to suggest when their use is necessary to soothe a suffering child.

After the lapse of some time, Isabella became more calm, and her convulsive sobs gradually ceased. All was still in the room where sat these sorrow-stricken females. The silence was oppressive to Isabella, and yet she could not disturb it—she could not speak. She could not add a fresh sorrow to her mother's already oppressive burden! Mrs. Gray remained silent, from a dread of learning the cause of such an unusual burst of grief. She had seldom seen her daughter so much distressed; but when she became quite composed, a desire to know the worst prevailed, and she then demanded an explanation.

Isabella gave a history of the events of the morning, to which Mrs. Gray, being well prepared for a great calamity, quietly listened, until her daughter had concluded her harrowing tale. She then said, "I feared it; I feared something; yet I did not anticipate such unparalleled villany."

"But you could not have anticipated this!"

"No; of course I could not," replied Mrs. Gray. However, I repeat what I before said, that you cannot hope for honorable revenge from a cold-hearted, selfish man. Such an one knows no mercy."

"He knows full well the all-powerful influence of wealth," said Isabella. "What is the value of my

word, or yours, when opposed to his assertions? He is very wealthy, and we, alas! are poor and friendless!"

"No; my dear, not friendless. We have many warm friends who would very soon do all in their power to counteract his influence."

"We have had, no doubt," replied Isabella; "but my short and painful experience leads me to fear that his word would be too readily credited. The very thought of disgracing my parentage by the necessity of asking for certificates of character almost maddens me! Oh! heaven forbid it! let me die first." Walking hurriedly up and down the room she gave vent to another flood of tears. After again becoming composed, she expressed great fears for her future safety; and doubts whether her persecutor's purpose was yet fully accomplished. She said there was no more safety for her in any place; and she besought her mother to accompany her at all times, and never to leave her alone.

Mrs. Gray, perceiving that her daughter's nervous system had received a severe shock, very promptly replied, "You need not fear him; I will protect you. Do not, my dear, shrink back with morbid fear; rally yourself, and prepare to meet the fiend with moral courage, if chance should compel you to encounter him. To-morrow I will go with you to Mrs. Brewster's; you have always thought her a sensible woman."

"She has ever appeared so; and I am half inclined to think she knew of this matter when I was at her house this morning; she seemed so very kind and attentive to me."

"You need not fear that this man can eventually harm you," said her mother, encouragingly. "His diabolical conduct will recoil upon himself."

"At the general retribution no doubt it will," replied Isabella, with an air of despondence; "but the world is slow to mete out justice."

"I think you are much in error, my dear; I feel a perfect confidence that you will be protected and justified during this life. Remembering that 'tis from the past we receive lessons for our future guidance, let us look for one moment at the severe trials under which we have been sustained. And now, when an additional ray of encouragement was just dawning upon us, another blow has fallen, at first view apparently more severe than the others; but, upon reflection, that which I first regarded as a great calamity, has to my mind vastly lessened in magnitude—innocence detracts from its terror. We have also another cause for increased confidence; observe how we have been supported under this overwhelming announcement—reason remains triumphant, and we are enabled to meet our foe. For my own part I feel an increase of trustful energy; proving that we never know what faculties we possess, until an occasion offers for their development. I know that our best acts are tainted with imperfections; but I believe, my dear, that we can both sincerely say that, in all our trials, we have endeavored to discharge our duties with a fearless and honest purpose—more than that is not required of us. I feel such perfect confidence that all will yet be well with us, that I can-

not permit this man's conduct to annoy me; neither can I despond. We may not, and probably never shall, enjoy the luxurious comfort of our past lives;—but a competency with contentment, and the encouragement of each other's smiles to cheer our pathway, ought to satisfy all our cravings."

Mrs. Gray's cheering, trustful counsel, had a tendency to change the bias of Isabella's thoughts, who answered by saying that—"time no doubt would enable her to feel as she did."

The twilight hour had already cast its shadow over all terrestrial objects, before the ladies could realize that the day was so far spent. They were interrupted in their conversation by Biddy, who entered to announce dinner. The unostentatious, but neatly-prepared meal, being soon disposed of, the ladies repaired to the snug little parlor, to spend the evening with their work and their books. While Biddy was engaged in closing the shutters, and replenishing the grate (for it was now autumn, and the evenings were cool), Isabella directed the maid to excuse them to the gentleman who had called the day previous, if at any time he should desire to renew his visit. She gave a positive order that he must not be admitted.

"Will you not see him at all, Miss Gray, whether you are engaged or no?" inquired Bridget.

"No, Biddy; always excuse us to him. I suppose you remember him?"

"Oh yes, Miss," replied the girl. "But will you not see any one?"

“Yes; all persons who call, except that one.”

“Very well, Miss Gray,” replied the servant, and she left the room, thinking the ladies looked very sad: “It’s too lonely,” thought she, “for them to be so much alone. How I do wish somebody would just come and cheer them up a little,—poor things. I wonder what’s the matter with that handsome man, that Miss Gray won’t see him; but it’s none of my business. All that I have to do, is to see that he doesn’t get into the house; if he should, I shall soon get warning to leave.”—And Biddy sat down to her dinner, so much occupied with sympathizing thoughts for the lonely condition of the ladies, whom she had learned to esteem, that she forgot that she too was alone.

The two ladies at the centre-table sat opposite each other; Mrs. Gray being occupied with her book. Isabella picked up a book also, and read a short time, when, hastily running her eye over the pages, she closed it, and took her work. That too failing to interest her, was laid aside. She then seated herself at the piano, her never-failing antidote. After running her fingers carelessly over the keys for some little time, and producing plaintive sounds, in unison with her heart’s sad emotions, she sang in the most touching manner the following “Evening Hymn to the Virgin;” Mrs. Gray joining her as second, according to her usual custom:

“Ave Sanctissima,  
We lift our souls to thee;  
Ora pro nobis,  
’Tis night-fall on the sea.



Watch us while shadows lie,  
Far o'er the waters spread,  
Hear the heart's lonely sigh,  
Thine too hath bled.

Thou that hast looked on Death,  
Aid us when Death is near,  
Whisper of Heaven to Faith,  
Sweet Mother, Sweet Mother, hear!

Ora pro nobis,  
The wave must rock our sleep;  
Ora Mater,  
Ora Star of the Deep."

After the conclusion of the song, which had never been better executed, Mrs. Gray resumed her reading. Isabella's hands had dropped from the keys of the instrument to her lap, and, with her eyes somewhat elevated, she was apparently looking at the wall, while she mused in the following strain: "How can I doubt that Guardian Angels are hovering near me, or that they impart this heavenly calm, and shed over me rays of light, amid darkening gloom. Blest spirits! connecting the present time with the unknown future—unknown but to the eye of faith—oh! leave me not, until my freed spirit be borne on angel wings to its peaceful home—the spirit land."

At this moment a ring was heard at the street door, startling Isabella from her reverie. She arose with nervous haste from the piano, and, resuming her seat by her work-box, listened for the voice of the visitor. "It is a gentleman's voice," said she, in a whisper, as she indistinctly heard an inquiry made for the ladies.

Mrs. Gray also heard it, but, like her daughter, she could not distinguish the voice. Hearing heavy footsteps approaching the parlor, and not being by any means free from dread lest their persecutor had obtained admittance, she arose, with a firmness that would have reflected honor upon a general on the field of battle, determined to defend her daughter from further insult.

While Mrs. Gray was standing dignified, and erect, waiting for the appearance of the visitor, Isabella sat, pale and motionless, with her eyes, like those of her mother, riveted upon the door. When it opened, a fine, rather tall, dark-complexioned and well-dressed man, hat in hand, and with the bearing of a polished gentleman, advanced into the room. Reader, who do you think it was? Isabella made the discovery sooner than her mother, that it was Mr. Robert Williams.

As Mr. Williams received the cordial greetings of Mrs. Gray and Isabella, who expressed their great gratification at his arrival, he observed with much satisfaction, that the pallor of Isabella's cheek had given place to a mantling blush of joy which he could not misunderstand—it was unmistakable. “She loves me still”—was the thought which filled his mind; and he at once resolved never again to leave her until an opportunity presented for declaring his love; as he felt confident that there was some mistake about her reported marriage with Mr. Brown.

. Had it not been for the delight he experienced on being again in company with the object of his long-cherished

affection, and in observing, as he thought he had, an evidence of her continued attachment, he would have been greatly depressed at witnessing the great change which had compelled his friends to remove from the delightful home, where he last left them, to their present small obscure tenement.

But Mr. Williams had no time for such disagreeable thoughts. There are periods in the lives of most persons when each moment is an eternity of bliss,—when neither the past nor the future are recognised—the present absorbing all the powers of the mind, and calling forth every emotion of the soul.

Such was Mr. Williams' condition, that he would doubtless have been compelled to reflect upon his locality, before determining whether it was California, Cincinnati, or New York. However, he succeeded very well in general conversation, until Mrs. Gray, with the view of attending to some domestic arrangements, excused herself and left the room.

"Miss Gray I cannot express the happiness I now enjoy, in being once more with you," said Mr. Williams, as he changed his seat for one by the side of Isabella, and in such close proximity, as to allow him to rest his hand upon the arm of her chair.

"The pleasure of seeing you is, to me, certainly not less," said Isabella.

"It seems to have been a very long two years since we last met, Miss Gray," said Mr. Williams; "I almost feared I might find you married on my return."

"No; no prospect of such an event," replied Isabella.

"The changes which have occurred in my family have absorbed my entire attention."

"These changes, which have indeed been very great with you, I have felt as if my own loss. An imperfect testimony of my sincere sympathy was expressed in a letter written not long after your beloved father's decease."

"You sent me a letter!" exclaimed Isabella.

"Yes;" said Mr. Williams, "did you never receive it?"

"Never," replied Isabella.

"Then you have not received a letter from me since I left Cincinnati?" inquired Mr. Williams.

"No; I never received a letter from you at any time," was the reply of the astonished Isabella.

"It miscarried, I presume," said Mr. Williams, satisfied that she had not received his letter.

"I regret it exceedingly; it would have afforded me infinite pleasure to have received from you any communication whatever," said Isabella, with such unaffected sincerity, that she betrayed to the gentleman her deep interest in his welfare.

"May I hope, Miss Gray," said he, "that your interest in me fully equals your expression of it?"

Isabella, blushing, replied, "I seldom express more than I feel. But, Mr. Williams, may I ask if you have returned to this country to remain?"

"That depends upon circumstances. I have arranged my business so that I can return or not, as best suits my pleasure. I have come home expressly to see a lady to whom I am devotedly attached."

“Ah, indeed! It is rather a long distance to journey, merely for the purpose of making a visit; but, I suppose, like many others, you have returned for the purpose of getting married.”

“That is my intention,” replied Mr. Williams; and then, after a short silence, he added, in a low voice, well suited to the occasion, “Miss Gray, I have come here to-night to tell you how long and how devotedly I have loved you. But, before I proceed farther, tell me candidly, whether you are, or ever have been, engaged to Mr. Alexander Brown?”

“That interrogatory, Mr. Williams, I can promptly and honestly answer in the negative. I am not, and have never been engaged to Mr. Brown,” replied Isabella, with some spirit; for she could not hear Mr. Brown’s name without a feeling of excitement. Mr. Williams, however, being absorbed with his own thoughts and emotions, did not observe it.

“Then may I not hope for some favor in my suit? May I not tell you, my dear Isabella, that I have, by actual experience, found my life to be a blank without your smiles; and may I not hope that, when you learn how the remembrance of your own sweet self alone sustained me during the past two years, you will listen to my petition? To tell you, in one short interview, of my admiration, my esteem, and my sincere affection for you, is not possible. Years only can develop what I feel. Let me call you mine, dearest! Signify your consent by accepting this pledge of my love (extending his hand), which carries with it my heart, and my

best efforts for your happiness through life." Isabella was too sincere to act the part of a coquette; and, as she received the proffered hand, with a cordial grasp, though unable to speak from emotion, Mr. Williams' arm was passed around her waist; he drew her near him, and imprinted on her lips the seal of love. Robert Williams and Isabella Gray were thus, in the sight of Heaven, made partners for life. They passed the evening until it was far spent, in recalling scenes of the happy past, and indulging in pleasing anticipations of a blissful future.

They talked as lovers best can talk,  
They told their secret sighs;  
Of days long past, of hopes begun,  
Since the last dawn of morning's sun.

After some time, Mr. Williams asked Isabella if she would like to see a copy of the lost letter? Upon receiving an affirmative answer, he drew from his coat pocket a copy of the letter, and handed it to her. The emotions she felt while perusing it, can better be imagined than described.

He then presented to her the letter he had received from Mr. Brown, requesting her to read that also. As she did so, the color suffused her countenance, and emotions of anger and indignation filled her breast. "I see it all now," said she. "Yes; I understand his diabolical plot; he meant to compel me to marry him. Thank God! his purpose has been defeated. Do you say," she continued, looking Mr. Williams in the face, "that fellow, Brown, wrote that letter?"

"You cannot doubt my word, Isabella," said Mr. Williams; "there is his signature."

"Oh no, I do not," said she, as, reclining back in her chair, she offered him her hand; "pardon me, I'm excited."

"I see you are," he replied, "there must be some cause for it."

"Yes, there is," she answered; "and I will now tell you all; I will give you a history of Mr. Brown's conduct."

"That is just what I desire," said Mr. Williams.

Isabella then narrated Mr. Brown's treatment of her, and its consequences, up to that time, which occupied her until a late hour.

The indignation which Mr. Williams both felt and expressed towards Mr. Brown, was unbounded; but his sympathy was first due to Isabella for her past sufferings; and the interview closed with heartfelt congratulations that his presence hereafter would be a secure protection.

As Mr. Williams was about to take leave of her for the evening, Isabella insisted that he should again see her mother. With an elastic and cheerful step she repaired to her mother's room, to inform her that Mr. Williams wished to speak with her.

When Mrs. Gray entered the parlor, Isabella took her betrothed's hand and placed it in her mother's, saying, "My dear mother, this is your future son-in-law."

Mrs. Gray welcomed Mr. Williams into her family

with all the cordiality of a mother; and after embracing him, she extended her cheerful congratulations to both. But she was so calm, that Isabella remarked it, and said, "Why, ma, you do not appear to be surprised!"

"No, my dear," replied her mother, "I am not. You recollect I was present at your last interview with this young gentleman (shaking his hand, which was still in her's), when he was about taking his departure for California." The happy pair looked at each other with a smile, and the gratified mother regarded them both with a feeling of thankful pride. That night two of that small group had pleasant dreams; but the sleep of one of the number was broken and restless, being often disturbed by an oppression of loneliness.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS.

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“Without thy smile the monarch’s lot  
To me were dark and lone,  
While with it, even the humblest cot  
Were brighter than his throne.”

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*Moore.*

MR. WILLIAMS’ residence in California had been productive of great pecuniary advantage to him. He had been very successful in the practice of his profession, and he had enjoyed facilities for making investments in real estate, which had resulted much more favorably than his most sanguine hopes ever induced him to anticipate. He had over two hundred thousand dollars invested in reliable securities, in addition to an interest which he held in gold mines, far exceeding that amount.

Learning through his correspondent at Cincinnati that Isabella was dependent on her own exertions for a maintenance, it led him to infer that the announcement of her marriage with Mr. Brown was either unfounded, or that the engagement had been formally canceled. He, therefore, immediately determined to return home, (he was not yet sufficiently domesticated

to regard the land of his recent adoption as his home,) and lose no time in soliciting the hand of the woman whom he still regarded as the only one on earth whom he could love with sufficient ardor to make his companion for life.

The reader has already been apprised of the result of his suit, and can fully appreciate the joy which filled his noble heart, now that he had succeeded in winning the long-desired prize. No ungratified wish remaining to mar the full enjoyment of his happiness, his thoughts were very naturally directed to a consideration of the most agreeable mode of passing his unoccupied time. He had been so long actively engaged in business, that he was unwilling to relapse into the habits of a gentleman of leisure. Such a life was not congenial to his tastes; and, even had it been, his better judgment would have assured him that *ennui* must be the inevitable accompaniment of an aimless existence. Being desirous to afford Isabella the advantages of a change of scene, with the view of enabling her to recover from the depressing effect of her domestic afflictions, he resolved that, if he could obtain her consent, he would hasten their marriage, and pass the ensuing winter in making a tour through Europe. Accordingly he very promptly communicated his wishes and plans to Isabella. When the proposition to go abroad was first made to her she received it in silence, and mentally communed with her own thoughts; but presently she replied, "Mr. Williams, you forget my mother; I cannot leave her alone."

“If you could, my dear Isabella,” he rejoined, “I should consider you unworthy of me; and I would certainly be unworthy of you, were I to demand such a sacrifice. Why leave your mother? There exist many reasons why she should accompany us. She is just in the prime of life, and will enjoy the tour equally, if not more than we shall ourselves. Such an intelligent companion will also be an advantage to us; and the very fact that she is your mother is in itself a sufficient reason for deciding, as a matter of course, that she must be our traveling companion. Your home, my dear, shall ever be her’s.”

The sudden transition from the gloom and depression of poverty to the sunshine of prosperity, had previously almost unnerved Isabella; but now, upon hearing such a frank avowal of sincere attachment, as exhibited in the generous proffer to her mother of a home and all its attendant comforts, she could no longer control her feelings, and her gratitude could only find expression in a flood of tears. Yet, how different were the tears she now shed, from those which, but a few days previously, had streamed from her eyes, and, like torrents of seething lava, burned into her very brain! Then, oppression, in its most repulsive form, was sapping her life-blood. Now, all is changed, and by her side sits the man “on whom her every earthly hope is centered. The happiness of a lifetime seemed condensed into the present moment, and those tears, falling thick and fast like the refreshing rain, were gratefully received upon the soil of affection, and

tended to knit in closer union two true and loving hearts.

Plans for the future occupied the time of the affianced couple during the few succeeding days. When the appointed time arrived for Isabella to give her music lessons at Mrs. Brewster's, Mr. Williams remonstrated against her doing so, saying that Isabella should not give another lesson, as she had no time to spare from the superintendence of the arrangements necessary for their speedy marriage and departure.

"But," said Isabella, "I must see Mrs. Brewster at once, and give her my reasons for discontinuing the lessons."

"Very well," replied her affianced husband, "I have no objections to that. How soon will you go?"

Looking at her watch, she answered, "In half an hour."

Mr. Williams then took his leave, saying he would call for her within that time, and he insisted that she should await his return. At the time appointed he returned, and finding Isabella in readiness, they immediately set forth. To Isabella's surprise, she found an elegant carriage standing at the door, into which Mr. Williams handed her. "This is quite unnecessary, Mr. Williams," said Isabella, "unless I am to have the pleasure of your company."

"I will not vouch for that; but I intend to enjoy the pleasure of yours," said he, as he took his seat beside her. Having inquired for Mrs. Brewster's address, he communicated it to the hackman, and they were soon on their way to the upper part of the city.

"It is very kind in you," said Isabella, "to allow me the pleasure of introducing you to my kind friend, Mrs. Brewster."

"No, my dear; it is selfish in me. I do it because I am happiest when near you."

As they passed the Astor House, Isabella, turning her eyes in that direction, said, "I wonder if my evil spirit is still there?"

"No," replied Mr. Williams; "he has taken his departure. I yesterday met a gentleman at the St. Nicholas, who told me that he had sailed for Europe?"

"Who knows," said Isabella, "whether we may not have the pleasure of meeting him abroad?—perhaps on Mount Vesuvius?"

"It is not impossible," was the reply. "It would be a pity, however, if he should fall into the crater."

"Oh no," said Isabella, "as much as I detest the man, I do not wish him to meet such a fate. Rather do I desire that he shall have an opportunity to repent of his folly."

"If it were not for you, I would make him repent," said Mr. Williams. "I would compel the villain to account for that missing letter. I believe he knows what has become of it."

"Why defer action on my account?" inquired Isabella.

"Why, my dear? Because I cannot think of having your name even in the slightest degree connected with his. It is far better for a lady to suffer wrongs to go unredressed, than to come before the public with a statement of grievances, which is only interesting to

the mass, in proportion as it ministers to the gratification of a morbid curiosity."

"Yes; I understand." Isabella, still dreading the insatiate vengeance of her persecutor, said, "I am afraid he will give us trouble yet."

"I am not," said Mr. Williams, very resolutely. "He must keep out of my way, or he will feel the effects of my wrath. But we will not waste our breath on such a worthless subject, while others more agreeable can be found." And he changed the conversation to more congenial themes.

After Mr. Williams had been presented to Mrs. Brewster, and the ordinary topics, attendant upon the introduction of strangers, had been discussed, Isabella told Mrs. Brewster that she would explain her reasons for not giving lessons that day, if she would accord her a private interview.

"Certainly; if Mr. Williams will excuse us," said Mrs. Brewster. The ladies walked into the library, where Isabella told her kind patroness that she was no longer under the necessity of teaching music; that she was to be married on that day week; and that herself and husband would remove immediately to the St. Nicholas hotel, where they would remain until the following week, when they purposed embarking for Europe. After entering into many minute details, she added a pressing invitation for Mrs. Brewster, her husband, and her daughters, to be present at the wedding.

Mrs. Brewster was so much surprised at this unexpected announcement, that for some time she listened

in silence ; but at length she said : "What will the children say ? Belle will go wild."

Isabella gratefully received the cordial congratulations of her friend, and expressed much regret at the prospect of leaving the children, assuring Mrs. Brewster of the happiness which her occupation and their society had afforded her. "Are they quite well to-day?" she asked.

"Very well ; but a little disappointed at not seeing you at the accustomed hour."

"I must see them before I leave ; that is if they are disengaged."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brewster, "I will send for them soon."

Isabella then gave her friend an account of the treatment she received at Mrs. Lincoln's, and of the outrageous conduct of Mr. Brown, during his last visit to her ; besides what Mr. Williams had furnished by disclosing Mr. Brown's unparalleled deception, as evidenced in his own handwriting.

"It is just as I expected," said Mrs. Brewster ; "I knew that an explanation would exonerate you. I saw Mrs. Lincoln the evening previous to your interview with her, and endeavored to convince her that there must either be some mistake about the report, or that it originated in deadly malice. But, poor woman ! what a pity she could not purchase a small share of common sense as conveniently as she does her elegant finery ; enough at least for practical purposes. Her gay and fashionable nephew, Mr. McPherson, who by-

the-by, is I believe, an honest, good hearted man, though not over discerning, is her oracle in all things. I am very slightly acquainted with them; but, from what I can learn, he is a toady. He flatters Mrs. Lincoln, and she assists to keep him afloat in fashionable society."

"It is a matter of small moment to me what or who they are," said Isabella. "Mr. Williams is determined to screen me from another interview with them."

"With your present prospects," replied Mrs. Brewster, "they would be your most humble servants."

"No doubt;" said Isabella, "but I can dispense with their homage."

"I am pleased with your independence," answered her hostess, "I think you are right."

After some further conversation, Mrs. Brewster insisted upon joining Mr. Williams. Isabella lingered in the library to talk with the children, who expressed their sorrow at the prospect of a separation, and in many ways testified their affection for her; Mrs. Brewster, meanwhile congratulated Mr. Williams on his approaching nuptials, and the conversation which ensued between them inclined the gentleman to think, as he reseated himself in the carriage beside his beautiful betrothed to return home, that he was extremely fortunate in having secured a wife who had proved herself equal to the emergencies of life, and whose happiness would not alone depend upon the possession of its luxuries.

As they were riding down Broadway, looking at everything and seeing nothing, Mr. Williams remarked to Isabella that he had done her an injustice.-



"In what respect? I have never discovered it."

"Of course not. Love is blind, sings the poet; and, though I cannot see in you any faults, I am thoroughly awake to my own."

"Suppose you present your case, and I will be both judge and jury," said Isabella.

"I should not have left you in the manner I did, when I went to California; I should have declared my love for you, believing, as I then did, that it was reciprocated, and either have married you at that time, or obtained your consent to our union at some future period. The first-mentioned course would have been preferable."

"Perhaps not," said Isabella. "My mother would then have been left to struggle through her great afflictions."

"Probably you are right; the latter course, then, would have been best; for by it a channel of communication would have been opened, that would have spared you all the trouble you have experienced."

"You should not indulge in such reflections now. It is far better to take a more philosophical view of the matter. These trials have, no doubt, tended to so mature and develop my character, as to make me more worthy of you. Therefore the judge pronounces the prisoner 'not guilty.' But, since you have introduced the subject, and the judge has exonerated the prisoner, allow me, without further remarks upon the individual case, to make a few general observations."

"The audience listens, my dear. Pardon me, I mean your honor, the judge."

"The young gentlemen of the present day too often commit a grave error, in postponing their marriage until after they acquire wealth. Many a lovely girl would be happy to leave her father's luxurious home, that she might aid the man she loves in reaching the goal of his ambition."

"But, Isabella, all are not like you."

"Many more than you imagine; I have known instances where attachments have been obliterated, (which evidently would have resulted in a happy union,) by reason of the gentleman's pride not permitting him to take the lady, whom he had selected for his wife, to a less luxurious home than that of her father; thus assigning a secondary position to the most sacred ties which exist between man and wife."

"Then you do not accuse us of being fortune-hunters?" said Mr. Williams.

"I allude to men of a class different from fortune-hunters; men of principle; men who would much prefer to earn their own living, than to be the obsequious recipients of a father-in-law's bounty. Young ladies are not unfrequently misjudged; they are many times accused of a fondness for luxury and extravagance which is often uncongenial to their real tastes; and, if indulged in, it is done with a view to gratify some doting parent, or to secure the approbation of your own sex. In many instances which have come under my own observation, it occupies a very inferior place in the scale of their happiness and affections. That there are exceptions to my theory, none will doubt; but all should not be included in the same category."

“You are truly an unselfish woman, Isabella.”

“Ah! do you think so?”

“I am certain of it. You have never inquired about my success in business.”

“No; very true, I have not; but I am aware that such information is usually imparted in good time. The truth is, I have been tempted with gold long enough. The prize that I estimated at a far greater price has been unexpectedly won; and I cannot imagine how you can suppose me capable of attention to business, when you are by my side.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE CONCLUSION.

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“All golden thoughts, all wealth of days,  
Truth, Friendship, Love surround her!  
So may she smile 'till life be closed,  
And Angel hands have crowned her!”

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*Barry Cornwall.*

FROM what has already been learned of Isabella Gray's character, the reader will not be surprised at the expression of a very natural desire that her wedding should be in keeping with her former circumstances, and not with the elegance that her altered condition afforded her the opportunity of indulging in. She acknowledged the necessity of assuming the bridal costume. It was not congenial to her tastes to appear before the hymeneal altar in robes of sorrow, although there was much in her thoughts and feelings which harmonized with her mourning weeds. She regretted that her father's blessing and smile of approbation would be wanting, and that the companion of her youth could not sustain her by his presence; yet, notwithstanding, she still felt that she must present herself at the altar robed in the spotless purity of a bridal

dress, regarding it as emblematic of the highest honor she could bestow upon her affianced husband.

She particularly requested her mother to take care that her wedding should be not only unostentatious, but cheerful; and it was her mother's greatest solicitude, to carry into effect her daughter's expressed desire.

The night previous to Isabella's bridal morn was passed by her in vain attempts to sleep. No cloud now obscured her happiness, of sufficient magnitude to prevent her from obtaining peaceful repose; but it would be unnatural to suppose that her reflective mind could be altogether calm on the eve of such an important event, and one which had been entirely unanticipated. She regarded it as the most interesting episode in the history of her life; a new character was to be assumed; and it gratified her, not only to pause and look back upon the past, but also into the bright, hopeful, and, to her human foresight, cloudless future.

On that eventful morning the king of day emerged from behind the misty veil of the eastern horizon, gladdening the earth with his gorgeous, resplendent beauty—no cloud appearing to obscure his dazzling splendor. One of the first of those cheering rays, which enlivened the chill October morning, pierced Isabella's lattice, and diffused its life-giving warmth over her while she was engaged at her morning devotions.

But let us not lift the sacred veil, and expose to a speculative world the communion of a devout heart with its Creator. Sufficient is it to know, that on his arm she had thus far leaned for support, and His coun-

sel was still her guide. Though on this occasion she bowed low at her Saviour's feet, her heart teeming with grateful thanksgivings, and trembling with fear that all she loved on earth might suddenly be torn from her, yet she arose comforted and confiding, recognising as a blessed stay and comfort to her soul, that, "as her day, so should her strength be."

We pass over the preparations requisite even for a private wedding, and resume our narrative at the hour appointed for the ceremony, which was that of twelve at noon. Punctual to the appointed hour two carriages, containing Dr. Montgomery, and his now very feeble wife, and Mr. Brewster, Mrs. Brewster, and their three daughters; Dr. Barton's gig, of which he was himself the sole occupant; and the carriage which had previously conveyed thither the bridegroom, were seen standing before Mrs. Gray's door.

The small unpretending parlor presented a most cheerful aspect; the furniture having been so arranged as to give ample room. In one corner Mrs. Montgomery was seated in the luxurious old chair which has been so frequently alluded to—she being now too feeble to stand, yet too resolute to permit her debility to debar her the pleasure of witnessing the nuptials of Isabella, to whom she had become much attached. Mrs. Brewster, in full dress, was standing by the invalid's side conversing with her; while Dr. Barton was similarly engaged with Mrs. Gray.

As Dr. Montgomery, robed in snow-white surplice, and book in hand, entered the parlor, Mrs. Gray left

it through the door leading to the entry. Presently, Biddy, who was a perfect specimen of neatness, arrayed in white apron and gloves, opened the door communicating between the front and back rooms, and the Misses Brewster entered the parlor, dressed very tastefully in pink silk, immediately followed by Mrs. Gray, leaning on Mr. Williams' arm. She, too, having laid aside her mourning weeds for the occasion, was dressed in good taste, and wore a cheerful countenance. Isabella entered last, leaning on Mr. Brewster's arm; and, attired in spotless white, she was the very personification of true loveliness. Her dress was a fine India muslin, made with exquisite neatness; the sash of broad brocade ribbon nearly reaching the floor. Her elusion veil, was tastefully fastened to her hair by a superb wreath, composed of white roses and orange blossoms, so natural in their appearance as almost to deceive Mrs. Montgomery into the belief that their fragrance produced an oppression in her breathing. She wore a superb set of pearl ornaments, comprising a necklace, ear ornaments, bracelet, and brooch,—a gift from the bridegroom; not that he believed his beautiful bride required the aid of "foreign ornament," but he had presented her this casket of pure and costly pearls as a testimony of his love and admiration. To the necklace was attached a heavy cross, composed of pearls and diamonds. The whiteness of her dress contrasted so becomingly with her dark hair and eyes, as did also the pearls with her clear brunette complexion, that those present thought her beauty could scarcely be surpassed.

Dr. Montgomery's deep-toned voice and dignified manner were peculiarly adapted to the special services of the church. When the parties had arranged themselves in their appropriate positions, the Misses Brewster officiating in the capacity of bride's-maids, the man of God commenced the impressive ceremony; and, in reply to the question, "Who giveth this woman to this man?" Mrs. Gray laid her daughter's hand quietly into that of Dr. Montgomery.

As the ceremony progressed, the necessary responses were made in a clear and audible voice, which added a greater solemnity to the service. After Heaven's choicest blessings had been invoked upon the heads of the newly-married pair by the officiating clergyman, the cheerful congratulations of their friends were tendered them in time to prevent that feeling of sadness which is frequently noticeable on such occasions. So few persons were present, and so little restraint existed, that the congratulations were very unceremonious. The bride, seeing Dr. Montgomery about to assist his wife to rise from her chair, in order that she might offer her's, immediately took her husband's arm, and they presented themselves to the invalid. As Isabella stooped to receive her kind greeting, "God bless you, my dear," fell upon her ear like a benediction from another world.

The bride's presents were then examined. Isabella had seen all but one during the morning, while tastefully arranging them on a small table in a corner of the room. In comparison to the magnificent display



of bridal presents customary at the present day, Isabella's would not be thought worthy of passing attention. Doubtless, the fact that her friends were few, increased the value of their gifts; at all events, they appeared to be so highly prized by the bride, that curiosity prompts us to join the bridal party gathered around the table, for the purpose of looking at the little collection.

The bride's eye first rested upon a parcel about the size of a package of letter paper, neatly enveloped in white paper, and fastened with a narrow white satin ribbon. The other presents, however, first attracted the attention of the company.

An elegantly-bound copy of Shakspeare, accompanied by Mr. Brewster's card, was the first article looked at. It was much admired, and was pronounced to be a valuable and tasteful gift. A small box, upon being opened, was found to contain an exquisitely-wrought bracelet, clasped with emeralds and diamonds, to which was attached a note from Mrs. Brewster, in keeping with her mental refinement. Sparkling and beautiful were those precious stones, as they were turned in different directions to enable the beholders to note their varied hues, and by none were they more admired than by Isabella. To her, they were chaste emblems of that sympathy which had been so beautifully expressed in the powerful language of the accompanying note, and she scarce could discern which possessed the greater charm, the jewels or the sentiments of the donor. A prayer-book, of convenient size for use,

neatly bound in Turkey morocco, and clasped with gold, contained the initials of Mrs. Montgomery and those of the bride. A volume of "Elegant Extracts from the British Poets," handsomely bound in Turkey morocco, was presented by Dr. Montgomery. Another box was opened, containing a handsomely-wrought gold card-case, to which was attached Dr. Barton's card. Very handsome hair ornaments, consisting of a bracelet, brooch, and ear ornaments, were presents from Isabella's pupils, the Misses Brewster. Miss Bell had a decided advantage in this instance, as the color of her hair was much better adapted to such ornaments, and was far more beautiful than that of her sisters.

We have now noticed all the contents of the table, with the exception of the parcel first alluded to. As the bride unfastened the ribbon that confined the wrapper, all eyes were directed to it, to ascertain the contents. Beneath the first fold of the envelope, she found a note, which she immediately opened, and read silently. A tear was seen to glisten in her eye; and, as she laid the note on the table, and took the contents of the parcel in her hand, she said, with some emotion, "This, my friends, is the manuscript of my dear mother's first literary production, of which you shall all receive a copy as soon as it is published."

This was an agreeable surprise, and led to many complimentary remarks. The apprehension, however, lest too much excitement would be prejudicial to the parties interested, prevented such an expression of encouragement and commendation, as would otherwise

have been extended to the authoress, for her energy and perseverance. But it did not require much discrimination to discover the operative cause which produced these first efforts at authorship.

About this time Biddy entered with a small table, which she placed in the centre of the room. After dropping a courtesy, and expressing her desire that the bride should enjoy long life and happiness, she returned to the adjoining room, whence she immediately brought a silver salver, on which was the bride's cake, partially covered with a snow-white napkin. The loaf was plainly frosted, and ornamented with a wreath of small white flowers. An elegant bouquet of white roses and verbenas, from Mrs. Brewster's conservatory, adorned the centre. Another salver, of the same metal, but of smaller size, containing wine-glasses and a decanter of wine, was brought in by Biddy, and placed upon the same table.

As the bride cut the cake, the blackness of the interior was found to contrast well with its external whiteness. The bride's health was drank in choice old Madeira, the contents of a few bottles remaining from former days; and the party, though small, was gay and cheerful.

While all were standing, glass in hand, exchanging brilliant sallies of wit and pleasantry, Mr. Williams, who had been so much surprised on learning that Mrs. Gray had become a literary character, that he could not dispossess his mind of the idea, proposed the health of the recently-discovered authoress.

"Certainly! with pleasure!" exclaimed several voices.

The glasses being again re-filled, Mr. Brewster proposed the following sentiment: "May the breezes, which will soon waft our newly-found treasure from our midst, be as propitious as her most ardent hopes can desire; and, after the enjoyment of pleasant scenes in lands renowned in history, and embellished by art, may they restore our gifted friend to us in the full enjoyment of health and happiness."

This sentiment was cordially received, and the authoress bowed her appreciation of the compliment.

The company finally dispersed, after receiving repeated and urgent invitations from the bride and bridegroom to visit them during the ensuing week, at their rooms in the St. Nicholas. The guests departed to their respective homes, pleased with the bride, the bridegroom, the authoress, and also with the unostentatious but tastefully-arranged wedding. As for the bride, she had not an earthly wish ungratified.

When Mr. Brewster entered his carriage, he ordered the coachman to drive to his place of business, where he took leave of his wife and daughters, who returned to their home, before which Mrs. Lincoln's carriage was discovered, and the footman ascending the steps with Mrs. Lincoln's card. Immediately upon stepping out of her carriage, Mrs. Brewster spoke with Mrs. Lincoln, and expressed her gratification at being so fortunate as to arrive in time to receive her visit.

Mrs. Lincoln descended from her carriage, rustling

her brocade silk, which was a sweeter sound, in her estimation, than the most dulcet notes, and, with Mrs. Brewster and her daughters, ascended to the drawing-room. The young ladies, however, soon left the room, in order to communicate the incidents of the wedding to their maid; to tell her exactly how the bride was dressed; that they had all been bride's-maids, when they had not anticipated such a thing; and to give their opinions of everything. This having been the first wedding they had ever attended, it had left pleasant impressions upon their youthful minds.

"How sweet your daughters look this morning, Mrs. Brewster," said Mrs. Lincoln, as the young misses left the room; "I suppose they've been to a morning reception with you, they're dressed so beautiful."

"Oh no, Mrs. Lincoln," replied Mrs. Brewster, "not a reception; my daughters are too young for that. But we have all been to a most delightful, quiet, private wedding."

"You don't say! Why I hadn't heard that anybody was going to be married!"

"No; I presume it was not much known."

"Do tell who 'tis; it must be some very distinguished people, or you wouldn't have dressed so much. How splendid your ruby necklace is, Mrs. Brewster."

"I cannot say that they are very distinguished persons; but, from their worth and capability, I have not the least doubt they will become so. You ask who it is that was married; and you will be surprised when I tell you that the bride was Miss Gray."

"Miss Gray! What Miss Gray? Our music-teacher?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brewster.

"You don't say!"

"Yes, Mrs. Lincoln, I do say, that Miss Gray was married this morning to a gentleman, who I believe is in every respect worthy of her."

"What's his name?" inquired the aristocratic lady.

The bridegroom's name being given, Mrs. Lincoln paused to think a moment.

"Well," said the good woman on the high pinnacle, "it's better that she should marry, if she has done wrong, than to continue living a sinful life."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Lincoln," said her friend, "but I cannot hear imputations of such a nature cast upon so estimable a lady as the one we are now speaking of. You have done Mrs. Williams great injustice."

"Me done her injustice!" exclaimed Mrs. Lincoln.

"Yes, Mrs. Lincoln, I think you have."

"Well," she replied, "I never intended to do her, nor any body else, an injustice. Any body that knows me, knows that if I have a fault, it is in being too kind. But Mr. McPherson come and told me just what that gentleman said about her, and advised me to turn her off at once:—now, Mrs. Brewster, you can't blame me."

"Yes, Mrs. Lincoln, I think I can blame you, for not quietly investigating the matter before traducing a lady's fair name."

"I shouldn't call a music teacher a lady," said Mrs. Lincoln, haughtily.

Mrs. Brewster, continuing very calm and self-possessed, replied, "Mrs. Lincoln, for the purpose of elucidating my position, we will suppose a case. You, for instance, have a daughter on whom you bestow every advantage, in the way of education, both moral and intellectual, that your wealth and situation in life can command."

"Yes; that's what I mean to do."

"Very well. Suppose that after your daughter's education is completed, and she is received into general society, your husband should die, and that by the settlement of his affairs his estate is proved to be insolvent. You and your daughter would then be compelled to seek an humble residence, and to obtain a maintenance, she might probably be necessitated to teach music?"

Mrs. Lincoln, who could remain a listener no longer, interrupted Mrs. Brewster by remarking "I guess that will never be my case."

"Perhaps not. But would you not, under those circumstances, feel that your daughter had still a claim to the title of lady?"

"Why yes, of course I should. But was that Miss Gray's position?"

Mrs. Brewster replied by giving Mrs. Lincoln a short sketch of Isabella's history, as well as of Mr. Brown's career, adding, that there was no doubt he had fled the country to avoid the disgrace consequent upon the exposure of his nefarious conduct.

Mrs. Lincoln's kind heart getting the better of Mr. McPherson's influence, she expressed much regret at the course she had taken. "Do you think Mrs. Williams would see me, if I were to call upon her?" she inquired.

"I have no doubt she would, if she were to consult her own feelings. I consider her a noble-minded woman, and capable of forgiving any injury; but, at present, I am confident that her husband would not permit her to receive you. I would not advise you to make any advances at present; the whole affair is of too recent occurrence, and Mr. Williams is too sensitive upon the subject, to act calmly."

"Perhaps I had better wait a spell, then," said Mrs. Lincoln; "but I shall write to my nephew immediately, and tell him all about it."

Mrs. Brewster, being satisfied that she had now done justice to Isabella, and in some degree dissipated the dark prejudices from Mrs. Lincoln's mind, gave her visitor a minute and pleasant description of the wedding, pronouncing it to have been the most delightful private wedding she had ever attended. She presented such a glowing picture of the bride, and dwelt so much upon her happiness and her future prospects, that Mrs. Lincoln returned home, thankfully acknowledging that Isabella had proved herself worthy of her society, and deeply regretting that she and Ernestine could not have been at the wedding. But she consoled herself by resolving that she would be among the first who



should call upon Mrs. Williams after her return from Europe; never once harboring the thought that Mrs. Lincoln, of Fifth avenue, could then be refused an audience.

---

One week subsequent to the wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Gray were seated in a saloon of one of the Liverpool steamers, awaiting the sailing of the vessel. They were surrounded by all their real friends, with the exception of Mrs. Montgomery, who, being too feeble to go on board, had been waited upon by Isabella the previous evening. It was a momentous parting; for they both felt that it would, in all probability, be their last interview; yet, as Christians, looking to a happier re-union hereafter, they parted from each other cheerfully.

Isabella looked unusually lovely, and there was a liveliness in her manner, caused by a relaxation from care, which her new friends had never before observed during their short acquaintance. Her perfect ease of manner and lively conversation were so charming, that, instead of tears accompanying the affectionate parting from her former pupils, and their kind, considerate mother, the latter all found themselves looking forward with pleasant anticipations to her return.

A more beautiful day never gladdened the hearts of the sons of earth, than the one on which our friends

steamed down the lovely bay. And here I leave them, trusting to Him who directs our ways, both on terra firma and on the mighty deep, to "conduct them in safety to the haven where they would be."

---

If my tale has a moral, it is one of encouragement to those laboring under misfortunes and afflictions. All may not meet with such perfect gratification of their hopes and aspirations, as did our heroine; yet, under the guidance of correct principles, patience and a diligent perseverance in overcoming obstacles are not only commendable, but seldom fail to afford relief.

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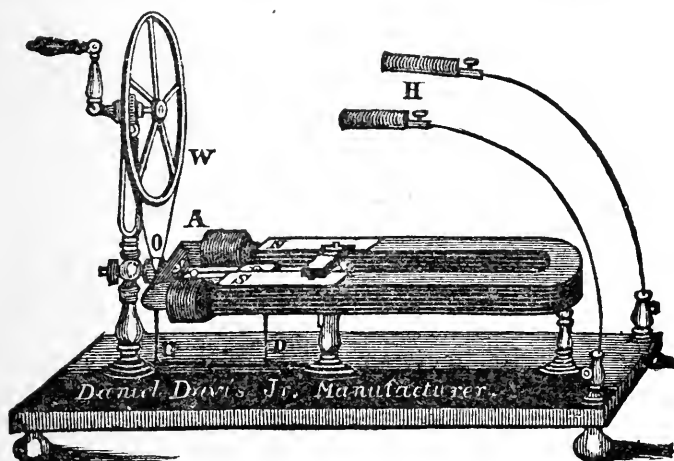
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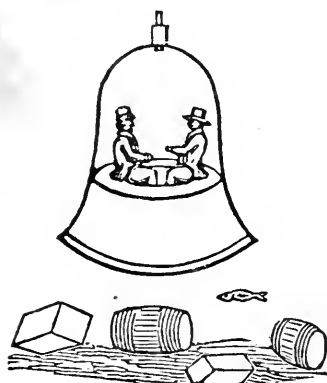
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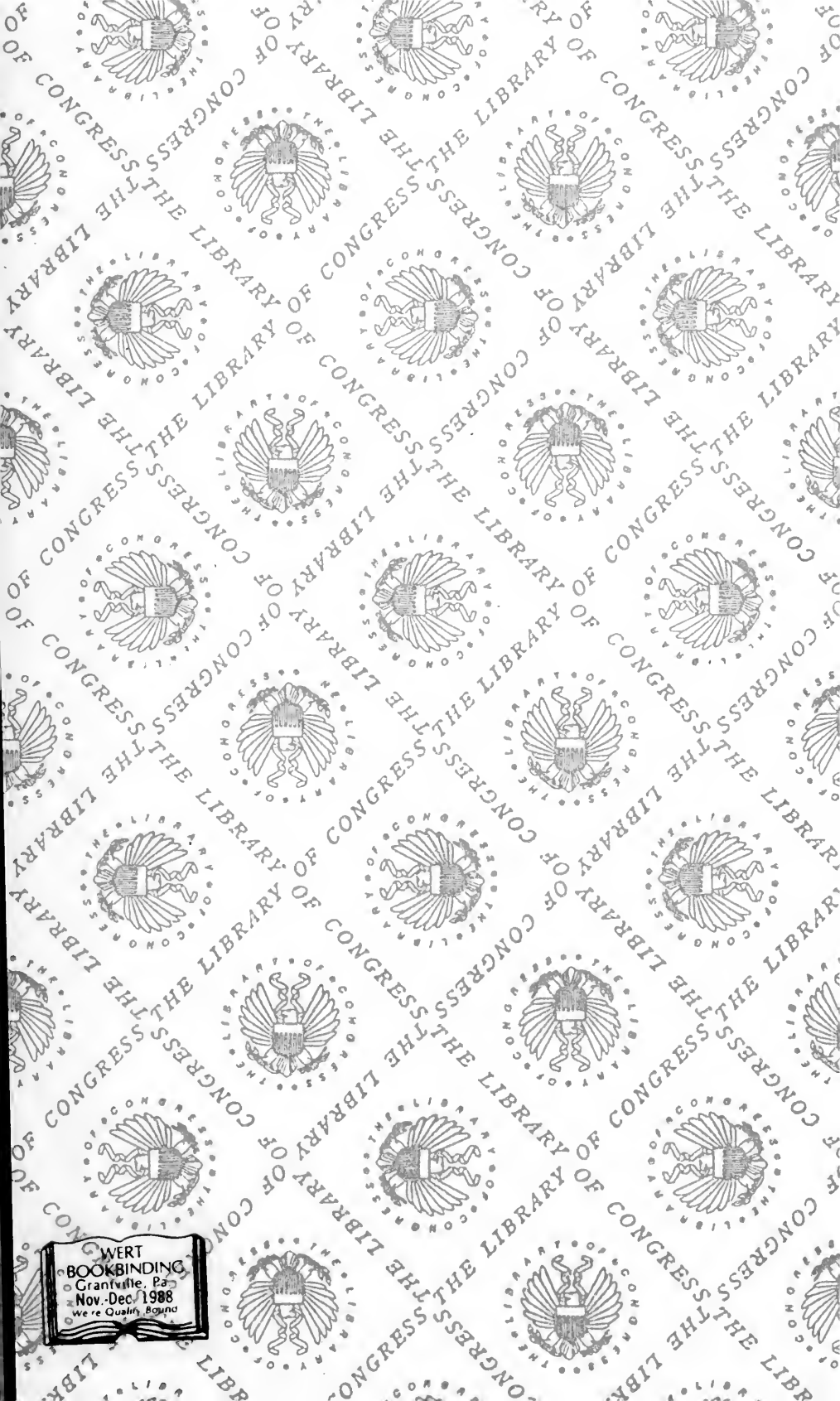


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